





# RKP

Information please  
Among this week's contributors:

Poems by Peter Bland, Marion Lomax, Tom Paulin  
Letters on T. J. Wise, Counter-tenors, Opposition in Brazil  
Information please

Doubrovsky's reading of *Polyeucte* with its critique of Péguy's ardent commentary (Cornellie has had inspired readers from Racine about Voltaire to the present), is arresting. Polyeucte's election of martyrdom, his self-election to grace, carries the idea of "choice" of his fate to its most radically ambiguous boundaries. The *fire-Dieu* latent in all heroism – and at this point, Cornellie – is predecessor, not only to Hegel but also to Nietzsche – is only transparently masked by Polyeucte's *fire-on-Dieu*. Hence Claude's uneasy hatred of this play:

With *Pompée* begins the long suite of dramas in which Cornellie, unsparingly observant of the politics of his own age, would explore the decline, corruption and self-betrays of the heroic ideal. This theme is given its most tragic and desolate expression: in the last of Cornellie's plays, the incomparable, autumnal *Suféna*. Note how the prosody and word-order "perform" the hero's death and how grammars his *requiem*:

A peine du palais il sortait dans la rue  
Qu'un flèche a perit d'une main inconnue;  
D'autres eurent Pont sauté; et j'ai vu ce vainqueur  
Comme si toutes trois l'avaient atteint au cœur.  
Dans un ruisseau de sang tomba mort sur sa place.

Doubrovsky's synthesis is illuminating. Power relations are, indeed, at the heart of Cornellie's theatre. But the



political force of his theatre can, perhaps, be more simply characterized.

Politics and language interact at every point. Language is a principal instrument of politics. In turn, politics is conditioned by language. As politics enter into the marrow of discourse, language modulates to rhetoric. This modulation seems to generate autonomous energies. Ideology and political purpose come to possess both speech and the speaker. The rhetoric of political statement with its reductionism, its grammar of polarization, its stylized violence, comes to dominate not only enunciation, but behaviour. Under pressure of politics, speech and act are fused into "speech-acts", in the literal sense of the term. The imperatives of articulation, unfolding out of an internalized logic of extremity, make plurality, compromise, reconciliation impossible. Human speech, which ought to be the most supple and provisional of media, stiffens to monism. It closes the speaker's world, as in armour.

Thinkers on language, such as de Maistre, Karl Kraus, Orwell, have observed this homicidal atrophy. Few writers have been able to render imaginatively the politicization of language and the linguistics of political conduct. Stendhal does so at times (and, fragmentarily throughout *Lucien Leuwen*). Dostoevsky achieves it in *The Demons*. Conrad in both *The Secret Agent* and *Under Western Eyes*. No writer surpasses Cornéille in the rendition of the progressive dehumanization of discourse, in the dramatic presentation of the process whereby the political word comes to dominate the speaker and agent, coercing him, by its own unleashed dynamism, to propositions, to gestures, from which there is no return. This rendition and presentment, with their pertinence to the semantics of political falsehood and barbarism in the twentieth century, constitute the core of Cornéille's theatre and its "lesson of falling darkness".

The pressure of economic and caste interests on what should be the spontaneities of loving address, emerge cruelly in Cornéille's early comedies, most notably in *La Place Royale* (carefully annotated in this first volume of Georges Couton's edition, these child pieces form a just prelude to the great dramas and tragedies). In *Le Cid*, the execution of public rhetoric reach searingly into private lives. Cornéille stringently identifies speech as the bearer of mastering doom. "A mot, comte, deux mots", says Rodrigue in his celebrated cartel. "Quatre mots, seulement" will be his plea to Chimène; in a motion which immediately translates the laconic fatality of suggestion into one of literal death. "Après ce mot, je réponde qu'avance cette épée." But in all literature, there is no severer study of human attitudes made totalitarian by speech-styles, of life made frozen and formulaic by irrevocable diction, than *Horace*. Old Horace's all too famous "Qu'il mourût" when boasting (misleading) news of his son's retreat before the enemy, is not only a virtuoso stroke of syntactical compression, but an enormity of utterance which expounds Cornéille's central insight. In the *Reims* of Cornéille's play, as in that of David's painting, the word-made-gesture is absolute ruler. Discourse masters life and death. "Ne me parlez jamais en faveur d'un infâme" literally ends a "sentence of death". It annihilates a speech-object which happens to be a living being. It is not any action by Cornéille which provokes Horace to final murderousness; it is the voicing of (highly restrained) lamentation. Horace's "Que dis-tu malheureux?" his "Va dedans les enfers pleurer ton Cincinnatus", precisely locates the verbal medium of crime, and the rhetorical authentication of inhuman response. When Augustus bids Cincinnatus:

Pris, sans me troubler, l'oreille à mes discours;  
D'un mot, d'un air, n'en interromps le cours

—he is, momentarily creating *un grand silence* in which forgiveness, tolerance, and hopeful uncertainty can return to life. If Cingna was to break this armistice of silence, the terrorism of political rhetoric, exponential in dialogue, would impel both speakers to fatality.

After *Polyeucte*, grace being indeed, the transfiguration of word into logos, Cornéille's plays turn on

this fatality. Cornéille's later, lesser known dramas are now showing signs of renewed vigour. There have been, over the past few years, powerfully convincing stagings of *Rodogune*, that oratorio of dynastic hatreds, of *Scorpius*, performed to packed houses at the Comédie in Paris, of *Sophonisbe*, taken up by an austere disciplined young troupe in Switzerland. *Oedipe*, as Doubrovsky argues, a more original, subtler work than was conventionally supposed. Foreshadowing current structuralism, Cornéille dramatizes the stress of incest on the grammar of personal identification and self-identification. *Tite et Bérénice* is far more than merely an agonistic defeat at the rival hands of Racine. *Surlana* is a masterpiece awaiting adequate production. It is a portrayal of the *tristitia* of politics such as one finds it in moments of Conrad's *Nostromo* and the desolate *commedia* of Musil's *Man Without Qualities*. But the music of the play is unique. In each of these plays, also in *Héracles*, in *Pertharite*, examples abound of Cornéille's penetration into the inertial violence which the rhetoric of political motives (it is interesting to compare Kenneth Burke's pioneer analyses of totalitarian eloquence) exercises on the human condition.

*Pompey* (1643-4) concludes this volume. The hero "n'y parle point". Note Cornéille's phrasing: the key fact is not that Pompey is himself absent from the play, though this is the case, it is that "he does not speak in it". And Cornéille, widow of treacherously murdered Pompey, meets Caesar in three confrontations. From encounter to encounter, language grows more absolute, more unyielding to the vulgar claims of life. Caesar hears the unconquerable blood of Scipio in Cornéille's defiance. He seeks to assuage her vengeful passion:

César s'efforcera de s'acquiescer vers vous  
De ce qu'il voudrait rendre à cet illustre époux

(self-reference, in the third person singular, practised also by de Gaulle, distances the mortal consequences of individualism from the imperatives of style). Cornéille views with Caesar in a contest of generosity. She warns him of an Egyptian plot against his life. But her motive is vengeance:

Mais, avec cette soif que j'ai de la ruine,  
Je me jette au-devant du coup qui l'assassine.

Et forme des décrets avec trop de raison  
Pour en sinner l'effet par une trahison.

Qui le sait et la souffre a part à l'infamie.  
Si je veux ton trépas, c'est en son ennemie

(note the incisive use of the present tense in "qui l'assassine", a use which makes of Cornéille Caesar's sole, subtly scornful saviour). Moved by her grandeur of spirit, Caesar seeks reconciliation. But an implacable poetry has Cornéille in its grasp. In perfect lucidity, Cornéille perceives and articulates the paradox of her frozen condition:

Je l'avouerai pourtant, comme vraiment Romaine,  
Que pour toi mon estime est égale à ma haine;  
Que l'une et l'autre est juste, et montre le pouvoir,  
L'une de ta vertu, l'autre de mon devoir...

Only the ceremonies of death can resolve the dialectic of heroism. Speech quickens to a magnificence of menace:

L'air, n'en doute point, au sortir de ces lieux  
Soulève contre toi les hommes et les dieux  
Ces dieux qui t'ont flétri, ces dieux qui m'ont trompée,  
Ces dieux qui dans Pharsale ont mal servi  
Pompey,  
Qui, la foudre à la main, l'ont pu voir égarer,  
Ils connaîtront leur faute et la voudront venger.

One seems to hear René Char's arch-Cornéillian aphorism, with its word-play on grammatical and symbolic futurity: "L'algèbre est au futur." And comparison with the prophetic imprecations of diverse regal ladies against Shakespeare's Richard III is not unintrusive.

M Couton's edition in progress is chronological. Plays, *poèmes de circonstance*, translations from sacred texts and Cornéille's rare letters, will be presented chronologically. The notes and commentaries on the dramas include the history of each text and the *varia* (this is especially valuable in respect of the early plays whose textual development is, before 1682, sometimes obscure). The Bibliothèque de la Pléiade has, all too often, made the promise of exhaustiveness and accuracy which its editors have not fulfilled. To judge by this *tombe* premier, the new Cornéille will be a monument to scholarship as well as to readability. But the "monumental" is, of course, the disabling notion. Justly met, Cornéille is an intensely living force.

## Amphion

Flame on the salt marsh,  
thin chimney  
like a pen, or a pencil,  
it makes the surface  
a plaited thing  
and burns, tribeless now,  
over the slobland.

On a concrete apron  
by the slack perimeter,  
there is a line of surplus trucks,  
nine gross of jerricans  
under a pegged tarpaulin,  
and a stack of exhaust pipes  
wrapped in waxed paper.  
A short man in an overcoat  
— the new government auctioneer —  
waddles, stops, and waddles on  
like a dumpy general.

Over the road  
on reclaimed space  
and dry dumped earth,  
there is that pointed,  
unpainted sense  
of real absence  
that bites like a beginning.  
Ah, we say, this is culture —  
the flame, the hardware  
and a voice  
that imagines what it describes  
and draws from the earth and the air  
this new-strung form  
that betters what we are.

## Tom Paulin

## Living France

Patrick McCarthy

François Mitterrand

*The Wheat and the Chaff: The Personal Diaries of the President of France 1971-1978*  
Translated by Richard S. Woodward  
284pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.  
£12.95.  
0 297 78101 4

Readers who pick up *The Wheat and the Chaff*, a selection from François Mitterrand's diaries between 1971 and 1978, hoping for sensational revelations or intimate secrets will be disappointed. "I have little taste for discretion", says Mitterrand and this is a huge understatement. He is the most private of men, keeping an edge of distance between himself and his henchmen, clearly ill-at-ease with crowds and today relishing the lofty remoteness of the French presidency. *The Wheat and the Chaff* contains a curiously moving comment on Aldo Moro's death. By tossing Moro's corpse out to the Rome streets, the Red Brigades had, reflects Mitterrand, shipped him to the last shred of his dignity — his loneliness.

Not only does Mitterrand tell us little about his family, his emotions and his dreams but he is scarcely more generous with information about his political battles. His career has been a series of defeats, each followed by an ever more extraordinary come-back. In the 1970s alone he lost a presidential and a parliamentary election, his alliance with the Communists broke up and his leadership of the Socialist Party was challenged by Michel Rocard. Each time he recovered, deploying his innate flair for political intrigue and his enormous tenacity. "I am incapable of stopping until I have exhausted all the reserves of my will", he writes in a rare, confiding moment, "I leave but a minimum to chance".

Certainly he was relying little on chance or spontaneity when he decided to publish these diaries. They serve a very specific political purpose: to depict the leader of the socialist-communist alliance as humane, traditional Frenchman. The Right might and did howl that the Common Programme meant the imposition of a foreign, collectivist dictatorship but how could such an alien order be imposed by a leader who still reads Lamartine — even "Le Lac" — and is moved to lyrical effusions by the Morvan forests? Not that Mitterrand is being untruthful in this book. The author of the diaries shows a scrupulous concern for individual liberty which the president of France has cultivated — recently Mitterrand intervened with Fidel Castro to obtain the release of the dissident Cuban poet, Armando Valladares, who had spent twenty-two years in jail. But the reader must not expect to learn more than one part of the truth and Anglo-Saxon politicians have probably discovered that Mitterrand is a more complex, more wily and more obstinate man than he would have us believe.

There is no reason to doubt his affection for Lamartine or for other Romantic poets like Alfred de Vigny because Mitterrand is steeped in the writing of the nineteenth century and can offer us some original insights. While he admires Zola as a Dreyfusard, he also considers him very nearly the equal of Balzac as a novelist. He makes a plea for Paul Fort, who is to most people a very minor and to Mitterrand a very neglected symbolist poet. How good a writer is Mitterrand himself? It is frequently stated that he is not; he becomes a politician and has been an outstanding writer, but this is surely an exaggeration. His sentences tend to dissolve into vagueness and his effusions into banality. Although he does not mention him, he seems to be trying to write like Chateaubriand. The spoken word suits Mitterrand better and if his speeches contain too large a dose of old-fashioned rhetoric their movement is direct and urgent. The Epinal speech of 1971 gives a better idea of his political force than these rather bland diaries.

Francis Mauriac receives a kind

word in *The Wheat and the Chaff*, for his novels than because he comes from the same region as Mitterrand. Indeed much of Mitterrand's time is spent in the Charente, where he goes up, and in the Morvan, where he goes to his parliamentary seat. If he has been able to reassure French voters, it is because he exudes the solid stability of the provinces. His diaries describe the cycle of seasons, the long summer evenings in the countryside and the migratory birds; oak trees chopped down by property developers; a cry of protest that reminds us of another of his favourite writers, Jean Giono, and explains why he won applause from environmentalists.

Few younger French politicians share this sense of France (although Mitterrand's minister of industry Jean Pierre Chevènement may be one). Mitterrand is a man of the Gaullist tradition, either because of personal differences or because Mitterrand was too proud and de Gaulle too contemptuous, the young Resistance spokesman and the leader of the Free France could not work together. But, although Mitterrand became the Gaullists' greatest foe, he was not immune from the fascination which de Gaulle exerted — "in conviction" that he was France, "in me" admits Mitterrand. Against de Gaulle's emphasis on the hero and the "French people" who shape their destiny, this may be no more than counter-mystique which Mitterrand expounds in language worthy of de Gaulle's memoirs:

I do not need an 'idea' of France. I live France. I have a deep instinctive awareness of France, of physical France and a passion for her geography, her living body. For it is there that my roots have grown. There is no need for me to seek the soul of France — it lives in me.

The political consequences Mitterrand draws from this vision complement rather than refute de Gaulle's. De Gaulle's sense of the nation was flawed, according to Mitterrand, because he divided the country, whereas he himself will unite Frenchmen and enable the working class to participate for the first time in government. But, whereas de Gaulle and Jacques Chirac are conservative and servants of capitalism, de Gaulle placed the ideal of the nation above the interests of the bourgeoisie, so his legitimate heir is François Mitterrand.

There is nothing in the least hawkish about this, for both de Gaulle and Mitterrand understand that "mystique" is an essential part of "politique". Draping himself in de Gaulle's mantle, Mitterrand is promising to use the state to defend the French people against a world-wide depression. He may not seem the right leader for our time because he lacks the knowledge of economics and Lamartine is not much help in understanding microchips. But Mitterrand believes that economic decisions are political and that the state must demonstrate its strength.

It follows that authentic French leaders will make life difficult for foreigners and, as the depression deepens, Mitterrand will almost certainly become a troublesome ally (aided and abetted by Chevènement) who is best described as a left-wing Gaullist. The spark off some of de Gaulle's colourful fireworks and Mitterrand's government has been grumbling about US interest rates and President Reagan's trade sanctions. Confronted with intolerably high unemployment, a weak franc and dissent from his own supporters, Mitterrand may well opt for capital controls and some disguised form of protectionism. And so on, because the quite genuinely humane Mitterrand can be very obstinate indeed.

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## Sorry events in Happy Valley

David Pryce-Jones

JAMES FOX  
White Mischief  
284pp. Cape. £8.95.  
0 294 01731 4

White Mischief closes the file on a number famous in its day. On January 24, 1941, Lord Erroll, 22nd earl and 22nd High Constable of Scotland, was found shot dead in his car at the edge of a road in Kenya. Erroll had been in love with Diana Broughton, wife of a neighbour. Sir John Delves Broughton, baronet, racing man, heir to huge estates, was duly arrested and brought to trial in Nairobi. Defended brilliantly by Harry Morris, reputed to have been the ablest barrister in Africa, Broughton was acquitted. Returning to England soon afterwards, but without his wife, he committed suicide in 1943. If not Broughton, who then had shot Erroll? And did the rich always live like this, or only when they were in the colonies?

James Fox first heard of the case towards the end of the 1960s while employed on an East African newspaper. Investigation appeared nowhere. Then, in 1969, back in London on the staff of the *Sunday Times*, he was invited to assist Cyril Connolly in researching and writing a long article on the subject for that paper. Connolly soon began to think of going else, and he communicated his obsession to his partner. The two were to be likened to Holmes and Watson. Connolly brooded and speculated, unravelling his thoughts, filling notebook after notebook. Meanwhile, Mr Fox was busy with the telexes to stagers all over Africa, rummaging through old addresses in pursuit of witnesses and evidence.

From the outset Fox had realized that Connolly was working out unfulfilled aspirations, and that process too had its fascination for him. Six days at the time, Connolly had been writing a weekly book-review in the *Sunday Times* for almost twenty years. "What are you writing now, except your reviews, I mean?" was the question kind friends used to put to him, or so he liked to complain. A few was (weak). Although secretly proud of his reviews, he continued to cherish a life-long wish to do justice to

the highest literary ambitions. Aesthetes such as he seem to have had built into them by their education the notion that imaginative literature has some kind of ultimate almost sacrosanct, value. Journalism, for which he had marvellous gifts, came off definitely second-best.

At intervals Connolly had attempted to give form to the masterpiece in his mind. In practice he was always to find that he could not help basing characters and scenes on direct experience, or in other words reverting to the journalism at which he excelled. He had positioned himself at the centre of *Enemies of Promise* and *The Unquiet Grave* in such a way that both books could be considered as much journalistic as autobiographical, which was why he did not really listen. I think, when the same kind friends told him that these were his masterpieces.

Better was to come, he always hoped. But each fresh effort proved once more that either he was unable to project his imagination much beyond what he knew of himself, or the world around him resisted being put into imaginative shape. Certainly he lived a sheltered life, in an Eton-Balliol-Chelsea-Riviera atmosphere among like-minded clever people, who rarely came unstocked unless through some obvious and rather banal fault of their own. Nothing very meaningful in literary terms could be made out of such cosiness: no plot, no moral.

Satire was all there was for it, a period type of satire in which the author is established at everybody else's expense. This petered out into stale journalism too, leaving as a last resort parody of other styles, playing games with words, an acrostic or a rebus, unusual quotations, finding that the right anagram for Wylan Auden was "a nasty unweid". Unable or unwilling to extend experience or to change his definition of what a masterpiece ought to be, Connolly chafed. Frustration was no easier to bear for being largely self-imposed. The weeks of many creative fictions could be sensed in the energetic melancholia with which he habitually dismissed himself as hack, critic and failure.

The Erroll murder was to provide Connolly with one more start, as it happened a last start. Here was a true-life novel, with every element ready-made: complicated plot, the

background of an Africa which he had romanticized since childhood, a social setting that was familiar and sensational, and the ambivalent point of view that, awful as the characters might be, they were the kind with which the author felt at ease. Moreover, there was something representative about that road-side faté — an *envoi* for a class, a country at war, an empire. If only the novelist's demand for the fullest information could be met, a true moral could surely be revealed in true facts.

The necessary research had Connolly out of bed and working at dawn. The measure of his ambition could be taken by the enthusiasm and professionalism, not to say restlessness, with which he inquired into anything of interest to him. Witnesses were tracked down and interviewed, including the CID detective once in charge of the case; the Broughtons' former lady's maid, and their solicitor in Nairobi; ballistics experts; residents of Kenya's Happy Valley by the dozen.

Among the latter was Diana Broughton, *femme fatale* of the case, who had subsequently married Lord Delamere and has continued to live in Kenya. "A creamy ash blonde," Connolly had described her, rejoicing in every detail of her path onward and upward. He met her by design at a dinner party, but in the circumstances could not bring himself to question her. Besides, she had always made a point of refusing to discuss the past.

There was Hugh Dickinson too, a friend who had followed her out of Kenya. Some suspected that he had been an accomplice of Broughton's. Also Juanita Carberry, daughter of a man convicted of currency-smuggling, a sadist, who had renounced his title as part of his admiration for Hitler. As a fifteen-year-old girl, Juanita Carberry happened to visit Broughton at home within hours of the murder, and she had been a bonfire upon which he was burning gym shoes and a bloodstained stocking (still not fully explained). "The end of the trail," Connolly noted at this point. Broughton had been fifty-seven, and doubts remained about his agility, his capacity to shoot, and his movements at the time of the murder. In Connolly's final view, a jealous Broughton, perhaps with an accomplice, had almost certainly murdered Erroll, and the Crown had bungled the prosecution.

Six years after publication of the *Sunday Times* article, Connolly died, bequeathing to Mr Fox his whole dossier. In proper Connollyesque manner, Fox believed that one more piece of evidence, one more interview, might do the trick. Back he went over the ground. His opening chapters evoke with mastery the hard upper-crust settlers in the Kenya of the 1920s. Happy Valley, where many of them lived, was a macabre euphemism. Sucky endings were the rule there, among a jostle of *déclassé* peers and younger sons, remittance men and adventurers, some of them quite beyond any novelist's powers of invention.

Erroll was almost a caricature, with splendid though slightly petulant good looks. Capable of responsibility, he much preferred to stand on privilege. Expelled from Eton, he had run away to Kenya, to marry Lady Idina Gordon, who was older than himself. Their household was a by-word for nymphomania, drink, drugs and, for a brief while, fascism. Soon Erroll fell in love with another settler's wife, and quickly married and deserted her, whereupon she died of drugs.

"To hell with husbands" was Erroll's motto, and that no doubt was all he had in mind when he declared his passion to Diana Broughton. Like Erroll, Sir John Delves Broughton was not what he appeared. In his *Who's Who* entry, he had falsified the date of his birth, a tell-tale clue for Connolly. As a Brigade of Guards officer, he had cut a dash until the day in August 1914 when he was due to sail with his battalion to France. Then he claimed to have fallen ill with a mysterious sun-stroke, qualifying afterwards for a disability pension. Extravagance and gambling ate away his fortune. Trying to recoup through various sales of land, he cheated his trustees. He grew so afraid of loneliness after his first wife left him that he was ready to persuade Diana to

marry and leave for Kenya by signing a bizarre contract licensing her to do as she pleased.

Skilfully Fox closes the net; and journalistic scoops rewarded his persistence. Hugh Dickinson was revealed to have been a party to two insurance frauds perpetrated by Broughton on his own estate. During the visit to London, Diana Broughton, long since Lady Delamere, consented to speak to him and in a scene which has lost none of its drama in the telling, said that she supposed Broughton all along to have been the murderer.

Finally, Juanita Carberry revealed that Broughton had confessed to her while attending to the bonfire. Something sympathetic in her made him lower his guard. Perhaps he had been fantasizing, but her testimony sounds as conclusive as these things can ever be.

Exhaustion overtook the euphoria Fox felt at this point. He had discovered what there was to be discovered. Like a storm, the obsession had blown itself out. Connolly would have wanted to puzzle out quite why Juanita Carberry had kept back her story when he had interviewed her, but he could only have been pleased that the longing for the fullest knowledge had been finally satisfied with such devotion and eagerness.

Far from reaching generalizations about the upper classes and imperialism or whatever, a book about these events could only have turned out as this one has, as reportage or, if you like, superior games-playing. The one and only thing to have been proved is that Erroll and Broughton were exceptionally well matched in their moral squalor. Could anything imaginative, or even darkly satirical, ever have been created out of this? The reality behind the case, like much else, fell a long way short of Connolly's ambitions.

## Tom Sharpe VINTAGE STUFF

"Tom Sharpe... has written his funniest novel in *Vintage Stuff*... The story is well plotted and here Sharpe is as biting as he has ever been in his social comment, although this is never obtrusive. He has not written a better or more skilful farce." *Martin Seymour-Smith, Financial Times*

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## Piers Brendon THE LIFE AND DEATH OF THE PRESS BARONS

"As devil's advocate, a part that he plays with gleeful exuberance Brendon has portrayed a selection of 'press barons' whose assembled biographies... constitute a history of modern Anglo-American journalism... His skill is redoubtable and his judgments are often no less accurate than provocative. A Faust with footnotes, Brendon knows the difference between anecdote and apocryphal. He cuts these figures down to size without ignoring that they were sometimes larger than life." *Stephen Katz, Observer*

"Scholarly but anecdotal lively study of the great larger-than-life newspaper magnates from Bennett to Beaverbrook." *Graham Lord, Sunday Express*

"As with all really good ideas that finally get put into effect, one wonders about Piers Brendon's idea of an account of the press lords of America and Britain how it was that nobody seems to have thought of it before. There is furthermore, no region of inquiry so perfectly accessible to the biographical technique that Brendon favours. The other added ingredient of *The Life and Death of the Press Barons* is its almost parenthetical provision of a social, economic and cultural history of the large newspapers of the past century and a half." *Anton Quinlan, The Times*

82s.90

Secker & Warburg



# Taming the nuclear genie

Wolf Mendl

MICHAEL CARVER  
A Policy for Peace  
123pp. Faber. £5.95 (paperback,  
£2.50).  
0 571 11969 7

This is a thoroughly intelligent and honest contribution to the great nuclear debate. From the start, Field Marshal Lord Carver takes his position somewhere between the total abolitionists and those who want the West to be at least the equal and if possible the superior of the Soviet Union in every kind of nuclear weaponry. He recognizes that in discussions of nuclear war "there is no proof that one idea is better than another. One can only fall back on reason and logic, and one has to admit that at the heart of nuclear deterrent strategy there lies a paradox that is not susceptible to a logical solution."

Bearing that in mind, Lord Carver sets out to persuade the reader that the two superpowers are deterred from going to war with each other by the vast array of nuclear weapons each has at its disposal and that if the worst were to happen, and war did break out, they would still be deterred from using these weapons. He believes "that their deterrent value cannot be extended to cover other situations; that the number and variety of their weapons systems is grossly in excess of what is needed to provide that deterrence; and that additional independent systems are superfluous."

The Field Marshal and former Chief of the Defence Staff is not equally convincing on all counts. It is difficult to see why he should be so sure that once deterrence has broken down and war has broken out between the Soviet Union and the United States, they would not be driven to use nuclear weapons against each other. Nor is it clear what he means when he says that the deterrent value of their nuclear arsenals cannot be extended to "other situations", especially as he later argues persuasively for Western Europe's reliance on the American deterrent. On the other hand, he is convincing when he questions the need for the inflated armories of the two giants and when he counters the arguments for independent nuclear deterrents, whether British or otherwise.

Yet after reading this lucid and crisply written thesis, one cannot help feeling slightly let down. The disappointment probably stems from the title. A Policy for Peace promises something more positive and far-reaching than a plea for stable nuclear deterrence. Carver was perhaps too modest, and too honest, to venture into the broader and more treacherous terrain of world politics, away from the narrow field of military strategy, on which he speaks with the authority of experience and profound reflection. What he has to say about the wider issues is not very illuminating, confined as it is to rather vague references to the "Free World" and the threats that face it.

The first three chapters contain masterly summaries of the evolution of the concept of "absolute war", the impact of the "absolute weapon", and all the twists and turns of subsequent strategic thinking. Lord Carver has studied Clausewitz with care and points to the dangerous and disastrous misconceptions in the minds of the theoreticians and practitioners of modern war who did their homework less diligently. Clausewitz insisted that war could only have meaning as an instrument of statecraft, that it was "a continuation of political intercourse, with the addition of other means". Unfortunately, his preoccupation with defining the "ideal" and absolute nature of war, much influenced by the Napoleonic era and his Germanic *Gründlichkeit*, laid the foundations for

later concepts in which war ceased to be the instrument and became the master of policy. Lord Carver has little difficulty in showing how the development of weapons of mass destruction has made nonsense of war as an instrument of policy; for what policy, other than that of a madman, could possibly be achieved through mutual annihilation?

Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) has, so far at least, inhibited direct armed conflict between the two superpowers. Although he does not say so explicitly, the author clearly indicates how all the subsequent efforts to develop doctrines of nuclear warfare have been attempts to reinstate war between nuclear powers as a credible and effective instrument of policy. But, as he suggests, all the theories leave us with the conclusion that once embarked upon, at however modest a level, a military conflict involving nuclear weapons may lead inexorably to an orgy of destruction.

Attempts to make the world safe for nuclear war are extremely dangerous because they can lead to an unwarranted complacency or a self-fulfilling prophecy. Lord Carver's remedy, developed in the last chapter of the book, is a call for a return to bipolar nuclear deterrence based on invulnerable retaliatory forces. Nationally independent deterrent forces in Europe are dismissed on the grounds not only of lacking credibility but also of undermining the stability brought about by the Soviet-American

nuclear balance. As he rightly says, the main reasons for having such forces are political rather than military.

Carver skilfully walks the tightrope between nuclear pacifists and nuclear warriors. He understands those who think the world has gone mad as they contemplate the forty thousand or more nuclear warheads the West and the Soviet Union share between them. He sees through much of the nonsense of strategic nuclear sophistry and he asks the basic question that many thoughtful people are asking everywhere: "In this situation, is war during the rest of the twentieth century, and in the twenty-first, likely to be effective and acceptable as a continuation of state policy by other means?"

As a good student of Clausewitz he accepts the instrumentality of war, perhaps even its inevitability in certain cases, but he has also grasped Clausewitz's warning that to pursue the logic of war to its ultimate conclusion is likely to defeat the objectives it was intended to serve. Thus, he accepts the supreme paradox that the hope of avoiding the catastrophe of nuclear conflict rests upon "the continuation of the mutual deterrent to war in the hands of the giant powers". An unequivocal commitment by both to defend their respective spheres of influence in Europe, reinforced by the presence of their conventional forces, will help to extend deterrence beyond their natural boundaries. Lord Carver goes on to discuss various ways in

which the benefits of nuclear deterrence might be underpinned. They include a greater international defence effort by America's European allies as well as the development of confidence-building measures between East and West.

Nevertheless, one is left with nagging questions. Is the present nuclear stability not likely to be as elusive as the search for nuclear superiority? It calls for a willingness to check the momentum of technological innovation which has not been displayed so far. Lord Carver's prescription requires a much greater mutual understanding between the United States and the Soviet Union than exists at present. Moreover, it suggests a greater capacity of the giants to influence the course of events than they may actually have. So what is happening in the world today, even among their allies, except the control of the superpowers?

As a military man, with the same bias of his professional outlook, Lord Carver has written a thoughtful, probing book. He tells us that the nuclear genie is out of the bottle and that it is no use wishing it away. The only course is to tame it, through debateable whether pushing it back into the bottle is the best way to do so. His essay should help to bridge the gap between those who say "Enough of this madness, let us have peace!" and those who insist that there can be no peace without nuclear security and defence.

## The well-wrought sword

Edward Luttwak

CHAIM HERZOG  
The Arab-Israeli Wars: War and Peace in the Middle East  
368pp. Arms and Armour Press.  
£11.95.  
0 85368 367 0

Israel has now had one more war, to add to the five that Chaim Herzog surveys in *The Arab-Israeli Wars*. Author of *The War of Atonement*, by far the best of the instant histories that appeared on the 1973 war, Herzog was a senior officer of the Israeli army until 1961; he has carried out important

assignments after that as a reserve general; and he is Israel's leading military commentator. His 1967 broadcasts did much to calm public opinion during the pre-war crisis of confidence. It is characteristic of Herzog's richly varied career that in the United States he is known neither as a soldier nor as a military expert but as a diplomat - having attracted much attention during his stint as Israel's permanent representative to the UN in New York.

*The War of Atonement* was episodic; focused on the more dramatic events of the 1973 war; but in his new book Herzog offers an overview of the 1948-49, 1956, 1967 and 1973 wars, as well as of the war of attrition of 1968-70; the book also includes the first authoritative account of the 1976 Entebbe raid. *The Arab-Israeli Wars* is an accurate and well-written survey of almost thirty years of intermittent warfare, which gains in usefulness from Herzog's inside knowledge and personal experience. It would be idle to pretend, however, that the work can remedy the profound inadequacy of the literature on the subject. There are no official histories of the various wars, campaigns and operations; and the quasi-official accounts of Netanel Lorch (of the 1948-49 war), and Moshe Dayan (for 1956) lack the comprehensiveness and precision demanded of a serious study. The same is true of the full-scale description of the 1967 war attempted in a book (*The Israeli Army*) by the present writer and Professor Dan Horowitz.

For the post-1967 period, the literature is even less satisfactory, with the exception of *On the Banks of Suez*, a remarkable work by Major-General Avraham Adan. Despite Adan's involvement, as one of the three divisional commanders on the Sinai front in 1973, in the controversies of command, his book is notable for its detachment, and offers a uniquely detailed account of the Israeli style of armoured warfare.

War may be viewed in a number of different dimensions. They include a technical dimension, nowadays very intricate in itself, a tactical one, which is as variegated as the multitude of combat episodes, an operational level, which comprises the schemes of action for the combined use of the different arms, and, finally, several distinct levels of strategy, from the grand-strategy to the highest level of tactical strategy.

What, for example, is the true value of the "technically" superior, but technically vulnerable, operationally

useful but strategically inadequate anti-tank missile? Should it be judged from a technical viewpoint, according to which the cheap missile will easily destroy the most costly tank, as on a test range? Or from a tactical view, whereby the unprotected missile and its crew are soon silenced, if not destroyed, by battlefield fire? Or at the operational level, which takes account of the loss of momentum imposed on armour forced to move cautiously in the presence of anti-tank missiles? Or, finally, at the level of theatre strategy, when the cheap/abundant missile are seen, in fact, to be crushingly outnumbered by costly/scarcely armour where the two actually meet, because the latter will fight concentrated in columns, while the missiles must be distributed to the infantry all along the front? Just how effective were those weapons in the 1973 war? Only by knowing the fullest details of the relevant 1973 fighting can historical analysis begin, perhaps, to yield a valuable lesson for NATO's defence of the central front in Germany, where a great mass of Soviet armour needs to be contained. Thanks to Adan's book we can in fact understand Israel's armoured warfare, missiles included, at least on one front and during one war; but for the rest, we remain largely in the dark.

Having won the 1948-49 independence war by successfully transforming the static and fragmented Jewish militia into a deployable force of partly motorized light infantry, aided by an improvised air force and tiny commando navy, Ben Gurion's government set out after 1949 to build a proper army, a small but "balanced" air force and a yet smaller navy, also of conventional form. The Jewish forces that won the war were heavily politicized, often chaotic, even when in appearance, Ben Gurion hoped that the new state could acquire smart-military forces and the model of the British and imperial forces in which tens of thousands of Palestinian Jews had served as volunteers.

But it was not to be. Parade-ground discipline and rigid British tactics did not suit the tenor of the people while the air force could only dissipate the complex form of its Great Power counterparts; as for the two-corvette, two-destroyer navy, it too could achieve very little in war. Once the attempt to imitate the former tactics and methods of others was abandoned, the young native-born officers who rose to the highest commands during

the 1950s started to develop original military forms *ad hoc*, often inventing what others had long had but also learning in the process to devise relational tactics, operational concepts and force-structures which would fit the specifics of the army and the people and respond to the peculiarly intense problem of the Out of this process of relational building, the present armed forces of Israel, gradually emerged in new forms, in the missile-bomb warhead the last to appear, in the post-war period (though it was still the Western navy to acquire a sea-battle missile, the locally-made "Gadot" while the doctrine of the commando inspired infantry was already shaped by 1956. In between, Israeli armoured corps was re-born original lines - so much so that the Israelis eventually designed their own tank, the "Merka", in a form had little in common with Western or Soviet tank. As for the fighter air force, which, unlike the doctrine of the commando, sacrificed quantity for quality, the contrast to the practices of the past forces, that was achieved all the more by the fact that the only air force in the world which had its first-line fighter pilots straight from school, without any preliminary education.

Two features reveal the fundamental originality of the Israeli armed forces: their method of producing large numbers of good junior officers without any military academy; and officers are selected from the army and trained in a short but rigorous intensive all-arms course which is every piece of imported equipment even if very advanced, and modified, sometimes very heavily, to fit the specifics of Israeli tactics and methods.

It is this relational quality of the Israeli armed forces, which, with local realities, that is the key to Israel's ability to produce a deployable military power from a tiny population of three million or so, from a modest economy and a public and private sector which together roughly five per cent of the national product on a per head basis as long as Israel's enemies continue to be ill-adapted to the new tactics and methods of the Israeli war machine. The young native-born officers who rose to the highest commands during

## Cartoonists-about-town

Celina Fox

ROY T. MATTHEWS and PETER MELLINI

In 'Vanity Fair'  
275pp. Scolar Press. £25 until  
December 31, 1982, thereafter £30.  
0 85967 597 1

*Vanity Fair* was created by Thomas Gibson Bowles, natural son of Thomas Gibson and a fashionable man-about-town. Having contributed to a number of short-lived satirical, theatrical and society journals, he launched his own paper on December 1, 1868. It contained a predictable mixture of political, financial and social comment, reviews, puzzles and a light fiction, supplied by himself and a number of smart friends. In January 1869, Bowles announced his proposal to introduce "some Pictorial Wares of an entirely novel character". The famous full-page portrait of Disraeli, drawn by Carlo Pellegrini under the pseudonym Singe (soon anglicized to Ape), appeared at the end of the same month. Thenceforth, the success of the paper was assured, with a constant demand for reprints of the portraits furnished by Ape, Spy (Leslie Ward) and their successors for collecting and framing in clubs and pubs the length of the country. Between 1868 and 1914, the magazine published some 2,400 pictorial lithographs.

In *'Vanity Fair'* is an ideal introduction to the magazine. The illustrations are well chosen and reproduced, the catalogues of artists, subjects and captions meticulously compiled, complete with an appendix listing *Vanity Fair's* own repetitions and mistakes in tabulation. No we can all identify "A Privileged Person" (Earl Grey) and "Highly Respectable" (Duke of Richmond), distinguish "Costs Disallowed" (Hon Sir Edward Benezet Kay) from "Divorce Court" (Frederick Andrew Underwood QC) and "Charlie" (Lord Carrington) from "Val" (Valentine C. Prinsep), "Bunny" (Lord Alington), "Muff" (Lord Kibbleslack), "Fairie" (A. W. Cox) and "Gladie" (Harry Leslie Dunstall Macalmon MP).

Roy T. Matthews and Peter Mellini guide the selections they make loosely along the categories adopted by the magazine itself, ranging from Royalty, through every section of the Establishment, to Journalists, Sportsmen and Americans. Politicians supplied a third of the intake, with all the prime ministers between 1853 and 1922 being accounted for, except Palmerston and Aberdeen. Each portrait reproduced is accompanied by a short written profile, which amalgamates commentary made at the time, frequently by Bowles himself under the nom de plume Jehu Junior, with the vintage point of the present day. This arrangement works rather better in the case of more obscure characters than with the most eminent Victorian authors undoubtedly have more fun describing the extraordinary career of Mrs Georgina Weldon than in summarizing the achievements of Mill or Carlyle in a few lines. Their efforts can border on the platitudinous and inevitably, given the scope encompassed, there are lapses in interpretation. William Hamilton Hunt, for instance, was identified in 1879 as "The Pre-Raphaelite of the World" not because he was more closely associated with the school than any other artist but because he had painted "The Light of the World" twenty-five years earlier.

Furthermore, the overall plan threatens against a full assessment of the development of the magazine and a brief history of the origins of caricature and the invention of lithography. They trace the decline of savagery in English political caricature by the 1830s, at the very time when the power of Philipon's *Caricatures*, employing Gavarni, Grandville and Daumier, was at its height. They see a strong connection between the classical Italian model of caricature, meaning an exaggerated drawing of a person, the portrait charge perfected in lithography by Daumier, and the aspirations of Bowles and Pellegrini.

But the *Vanity Fair* portraits were not wholly a sophisticated foreign import. Fraser's Magazine, edited by William Maginn, had published in the 1830s the caricature portraits of Daniel Maclise. Working under the pseudonym "Alfred Crowquiss", he depicted nearly eighty illustrious characters of the day, including a few like Carlyle and Disraeli, who were to appear over thirty years later in *Vanity Fair*. It would have been interesting to have reproduced such comparative material in order to assess the new vigour which Pellegrini introduced to the mode, compounded by the weight and substance which chromolithography gave to the feathery linear technique of English lithographic caricature. The stages entailed in the process could have been illustrated with the reproduction of some preparatory drawings and water-colours.

As Thackeray noted with regret as early as 1838, compared with the situation in France, lithography was a neglected medium in England, where wood-engraving was the dominant method of reproduction. The life that remained in the English tradition of political caricature was to be found from the 1840s in the big cuts for *Punch*, with their strongly emblematic overtones. Bowles wisely did not choose to compete with their success (nor with Matt Morgan's striking cartoons in *The Tomahawk*). The nearest approximation to the political cartoon in *Vanity Fair* was the series of European "Sovereigns", bought probably "off the peg" from Tissot in 1869. But his image of Napoleon III, tottering forward on the arm of Marianne, did not set a style.

Instead, Ape's single figures, rarely embellished with more than a faint shadow, a walking stick or a parliamentary bench, served as the model for nearly half a century. Overly uniform in their predominantly sober garb, these characters none the less managed to display an astonishing degree of sartorial eccentricity, ranging from Carlyle's memorable wide-brimmed straw hat to Wilde's enormous pink silk handkerchief, stuffed into his velvet waistcoat. For all the much-vaunted understatement of the Victorian gentleman, the cut of hair and whiskers was wildly and unselfconsciously various. Spy appears to have haunted the law courts and universities in an effort to capture every idiosyncrasy. The Honourable Judge Sir John Mellor sizes up the claimant in the celebrated Tichborne case, sucking his little finger. Mill delivers his lecture on "Women's Rights" at Euston Hall looking like an earnest parrot, while the chronically short-sighted W. A. Spooner bends almost to the surface of the lectern in an effort to read his text. Some features in the gallery remain

Mark Amory

BRIAN MASTERS

Great Hostesses  
258pp. Constable. £8.95.  
0 09 464000 9

If the great hostesses of *Great Hostesses* could be melted down into an archetype, the resulting woman would not be outstandingly beautiful or witty, nor would she be relentlessly pursued by men. Her decent, dull husband would be dead or absent, her unfortunate children rarely seen, if they existed at all. To begin with there would be a great fortune to keep her in diamonds and dinner parties, but in old age she would descend to comparative poverty, which would bring the loneliness she had always feared. She would bear her adversity with courage and dignity. The single-mindedness which had made her remarkable, the energy and gift for organization which had been harnessed in the pursuit of desirable, preferably royal, guests, would tend to make her ruthless but not prevent her from being generous and buoyant; while, alive, she was formidable, when dead a little ridiculous.

Brian Masters, in putting together

enigmatic. Was Arnold's good-humoured countenance an oblique reference by Tissot to the champion of Sweetness and Light?

Max Beerbohm was of the opinion that even before the close of the 1870s, Pellegrini's work had lost its bite. Ward considered himself to be a member of the Establishment and the studio sittings he arranged for some of his subjects were scarcely conducive to satirical insight. But because there is so little documentary information about why, how and by whom the characters were chosen, it is extremely difficult to trace any alteration in policy over the years. The authors do note a change of emphasis in the articles, with less political comment and more society gossip. However, they can still occasionally find among the illustrations clever indications of public figures after the turn of the century. Beerbohm himself supplied several of the most devastating,

parodying the genre with his victims billowing out of the frame as if overstuffed with cotton wool. Indeed, Beerbohm's whole output confirmed that the position of the older generation of *Vanity Fair* artists could no longer be maintained. Whereas Ape and Spy had regarded their subjects as contemporaries, Max was looking back from the Edwardian age, viewing the heroes of the Victorians with a mixture of childlike awe, nostalgia and irreverence. *Vanity Fair* did make an effort to keep abreast of the times. Cars and aeroplanes appear as props. Gordon Selfridge stands sharp-suited in front of his department store. Christabel Pankhurst intrudes, a Portia in aesthetic dress, and is surprisingly well treated. But in February 1914, the paper merged with *Harper's Home* and within a few months, its celebrities were to be forever marooned in a lost age.

This excellent book, seems to have consciously set about redressing the balance of the current reputation of most of the women he writes about. After Nicholas Mosley's life of her son, *Julian Grenfell*, Lady Desborough was in need of defence. Her frothy charm is hard to convey, though her bulter, not an excitable man himself, accurately imitated her style in reply to a telegram - unfortunately from the Thames Conservancy Board - "Yes how perfectly wonderful love love love". Old Lady Londonderry was a link with tradition; she was beautiful, aristocratic and political, but she provided quick meals and filthy food if you stopped to converse, your cold if you were to be whipped from beneath her unenbushy fork. Her daughter-in-law, bewitched Ramsay MacDonald and Masters is on her side too. Grace Vanderbilt (also a familiar figure) was bitterly opposed by the family into which she married, but in the end she triumphed on a staggering scale.

More intriguing are less known figures such as the delightful Mrs Societyman Fish who could neither take social life seriously nor pretend to like opera. When a footman retrieved her wig, she told his master, "Sweet pet, you will have to discharge your man. My agent is known to him". In recent memoirs Emerald Cunard has been

gushed over and Sibyl Colefax derided. Once again Masters corrects a little, while granting Lady Cunard exceptional charm and intelligence and acknowledging Lady Colefax's indiscriminate lion-hunting. Lord Berners once asked the latter to a meal "to meet the P of W". She chuckled, "everything only in the middle of this next to the Provost of Worcester".

Far the most fascinating story is that of Laura Corrigan. Once a telephone operator from Cleveland, Ohio, she arrived in London in 1922 knowing no one. She hired not only Mrs Keppel's fine house but, for a little extra, her visitors' book and, crucially, her butler; he procured Mrs Keppel's acquaintances for Mrs Corrigan who was neither subtle nor even well-informed. Having placed Jubile Lancaster next to a duchess because she thought him to be the Duke of Lancaster, she turned to her guests and cried out, "Hands up the next ranking duke". But she was good and kind and her triumphant story includes business coups, suicides, murky origins and wartime heroism as well as kings and faux pas.

Brian Masters is a sane guide to a giddy world and gives his heroines their opera. When a footman retrieved her wig, she told his master, "Sweet pet, you will have to discharge your man. My agent is known to him". In recent memoirs Emerald Cunard has been

## Rolling in it

John Stokes

WILLIAM DAVIS

The Rich: A Study of the Species  
210pp. Sidgwick and Jackson. £8.95.  
0 283 98865 7

The editor of *High Life*, British Airways' in-flight magazine, has produced a book that, like a giveaway glossy and the courtesy drinks which accompany it, is designed to promote confidence and take our minds off a possible crash. *The Rich* is a relaxing package of consumer goodies, desirable enough if your head is in the air, quite irrelevant when your feet are on the ground.

At the same time *The Rich* does duty as a manual for survival. Should the crash occur then you too, it suggests, can seize the opportunity, as the rich have often done, of buying cheap and selling dear. There's hope for everyone. After all, as Davis insists throughout, the rich are much the same as you and me. Archduke Otto von Habsburg has "an unpretentious house where he lives with his wife". Paul McCartney "watches television a great deal". Hugh Hefner's parties turn out to be "rather boring". When the wife of a rich man decorates his house, he is likely to comment, "Yes, that's nice, or 'I don't care for it, but if it makes you happy, go ahead.' Confronted by a Picasso, he may well confess (while reaching for his chequebook), "I don't understand what the fellow is getting at." Even Royalty, though fond of chocolate cake, is "like all of us", and worries about its figure.

Some of us, of course, are naturally more different than others. When it comes to making millions, women, says Davis, are heavily outnumbered. Then again, the seemingly same may turn out to be different after all. It's possible to be so rich that you have to pretend to be poor: "dress casually, eat in good but modest restaurants".

Real poverty has possibilities too, since "even Christ came from a poor family". Though Davis seems unaware that there has been a certain amount of discussion of this issue over the years it does raise the interesting question, "Is God rich?" The best guess is that he comes in Davis's most enviable category, first defined by Paul Getty: those who have so much that they simply "can't count". It's hard to be sure, as the Almighty is one of the very few important people with whom the author is unequipped.

*The Rich* tells us much that we know, more that we don't need to know, and most of what we really shouldn't want to know, all in a style as meretricious as its message. A "relaxed manner and soft voice" invariably conceal a sharp business brain and steel of determination.

The Duke of Westminster is a "slim, boyish-faced six-footer" but "keeps a low profile" - which, despite a fortune of £600m or thereabouts, can't be too comfortable. Attempt change and you "break the mould", try feminism and you're a "libber", think socialism and you "bet a government led by Tony Benn". Think rich, though, and you "do your own thing". Davis's suphemism for business: "More than anything else, his reputation is the quality of his anachronistic cliché: 'expose' an underlying contradiction between an 'no' apologist for capitalism and a final harangue on the virtues of free enterprise - 'Courage', 'Concentration', 'Thinking Big'.

This is a bit different: a potential high-flyer might easily be swayed when "with a shy flourish" Davis reveals that he too is rich. Not in the "can't count" league, admittedly, but still, possessing homes in the South of France, and the Bahamas, and a turnover "approaching the £3m mark".

How ironic it is that the source of Scott Fitzgerald's much abused remark that the rich "are different from you and me" (Davis's predictable text) should be a story that opens with a warning which might, on the face of it, have been aimed at Davis himself. "Begin with an individual, and before you know it you find that you have created a type; begin with a type and you find that you have created nothing."



Herbert Præd MP, by Ape, 1874, from in 'Vanity Fair' reviewed here.

## Queening it

Mark Amory

BRIAN MASTERS

Great Hostesses  
258pp. Constable. £8.95.  
0 09 464000 9

If the great hostesses of *Great Hostesses* could be melted down into an archetype, the resulting woman would not be outstandingly beautiful or witty, nor would she be relentlessly pursued by men. Her decent, dull husband would be dead or absent, her unfortunate children rarely seen, if they existed at all. To begin with there would be a great fortune to keep her in diamonds and dinner parties, but in old age she would descend to comparative poverty, which would bring the loneliness she had always feared. She would bear her adversity with courage and dignity. The single-mindedness which had made her remarkable, the energy and gift for organization which had been harnessed in the pursuit of desirable, preferably royal, guests, would tend to make her ruthless but not prevent her from being generous and buoyant; while, alive, she was formidable, when dead a little ridiculous.

Brian Masters, in putting together



## The perils of ambition

J. A. Guy

JASPER RIDLEY

The Statesman and the Fanatic: Thomas Wolsey and Thomas More 338pp. Constable. £12.50. 0 09 46370 X

Thomas Wolsey and Thomas More were equals and opposites. Both became lord chancellor to Henry VIII; both paid the heaviest price of ambition. Wolsey was vainglorious and ruthless, yet optimistic and relatively tolerant; More was ascetic and introspective, pessimistic and a persecutor. Wolsey became a cardinal *legatus a latere*; More remained an layman. Wolsey's flair, ultimately, was for secular policy; More's for religious polemics. Neither could entirely satisfy their king. Wolsey died miserably, but privately, and in the nick of time; More died in the glare of European publicity, a reluctant martyr to conscience and papal primacy. Both men possess importance for the Catholic Church; both fascinate historians.

Jasper Ridley's double biography draws the similarities and the contrasts, but the message is clear: Wolsey was a statesman, More a fanatic. Not for a century have the issues been so robustly defined. In 1888 Mandell Creighton declared Wolsey's pragmatism to be his unique achievement. Twenty years before, J. A. Froude had deplored the "fanaticism" of Sir Thomas More, under whom philosophic mercies "the state recommenced its hateful activity".

Modern historical scholarship has expanded the focus, but Ridley returns to the Victorian framework with relish and bravado. His portrait of Wolsey is recognizable, readable and essentially valid, even if excessively based on diplomatic history. The Cardinal

exulted in state papers and complex negotiations, notably at Calais and Bruges in 1521; the means here justified the ends. Beginning as the brilliant administrator of Henry VIII's early war supplies, Wolsey took command of England's diplomacy in an age when glory was won on the battlefield, and ardour was kindled by armies on the march. As *legatus a latere*, as well as Henry's prime minister, Wolsey enjoyed an unrivalled position, for his links with the papacy enhanced his power, prestige and credibility; his influence was matched only by that of the Emperor Charles V. Yet manipulation was the name of the game; England was at war with France, then the architect of perpetual peace. She was next at war again with France in alliance with Spain; then at war with Spain in support of France. Sieges, parleys, truces and treaties dazzle — but the sack of Rome in 1527 was decisive. Wolsey's silken web of intrigue would destroy its creator: with Pope Clement VII subject to dominant imperial influence, Wolsey could not achieve Henry VIII's divorce from Catherine of Aragon, who was the Emperor's aunt. The Cardinal's fate was sealed.

Ridley judges Wolsey's diplomacy as impressive. Many historians today would deem it simply dull — certainly it was an expensive failure, for England was isolated from the peace-making at Cambrai in 1529. It is a matter of opinion whether statesmanship can be a speculative success. What is less speculative is the undoubted relevance of Wolsey's domestic policy to this discussion. Even Creighton devoted a whole chapter to the topic, but Ridley curiously avoids it. Wolsey's reforms of the Household and Council are surprisingly omitted; there is but a whisper of the catastrophic consequences for the English Church of his papal legacy. The manipulation of domestic political faction by Wolsey is barely described — his success there was as signal as anything achieved by his continental diplomacy. Wolsey's

invention, with another, of the progressive Tudor and Stuart subsidy to replace the outdated taxation system of 1334 likewise goes unmentioned. So do the impressive consensus of England's military and financial capacity (1522), of crime and disorder (1526) and of food supplies and population (1527). The Cardinal's policies on enclosures, and in Star Chamber and Chancery, are summarized, if blandly. Yet the account is not free of errors. Wolsey was not the sole judge in Chancery; he did not personally decide the 7,500 equity cases filed under him; he did not sit in Chancery only on Sundays.

We have every reason to believe that Wolsey's domestic, as much as foreign, policy articulated his statesmanship. Ridley has at a stroke reduced the scale, and cumulative impact, of Wolsey's operations by half. His one-dimensional interpretation stands. His judgement of Wolsey's stature is unquestionably diminished, his genius sadly confined.

More succeeded Wolsey as lord chancellor, but his opposition to the king's divorce precluded him from prime ministerial rank. With Henry VIII's consent, More resolved to serve in "other things" — top of his list being the extermination of heresy. Despite the elusive tolerance of *Utopia*, More hated heresy and persecuted Protestants. He castigated Luther, Tyndale, Fish, Frith and the "anonymous" Sir John Some-say, who was Christopher St German, with pungent, and obscene, polemics. He used Star Chamber to enforce strict religious censorship, banning the import into England of all foreign books on any subject whatsoever. In 1530 he frustrated the projected English Bible — when even the reactionary Henry VIII favoured the reform. Above all, More immersed himself in detecting, and interrogating, suspected heretics, he was thus responsible vicariously, as deleterious, and more directly, as supervisor of his secular arm under the heresy laws, for

the terrible deaths of those Protestants burned at the stake. More stood for the Catholic cause and, ultimately, papal primacy. Ridley positively flaunts his abhorrence of More's mistaken ideals, bad manners and cruel methods, yet his version is incomplete, for he fails to penetrate the overriding objective of More's moral crusade. More's desire was to save souls; he believed that obstinate heresy was the cancer of Christian society, and that surgery alone could protect healthy souls from infection. Twentieth-century morality knows that More was wrong. Yet in the England of the 1530s, his offence was merely excessive zeal by comparison with his clerical predecessor, Wolsey: the King's Council investigated every murmur against More prior to his trial in 1535, but found nothing to add to his indictment.

In the end, More died for the dogma of papal primacy, for he had come to believe that the papacy was a divine institution. And it is not true, as Ridley claims, that More refused the oath of succession because he would not swear to uphold Henry VIII's divorce, even though he had made statements to the House of Lords in its favour. More's objection was always to the *preamble* of the Act of Succession, which denounced papal authority as a usurpation of Henry VIII's "imperial" power. Cranmer suggested that More be permitted to swear to the body of the act, without the preamble — but Henry refused.

Ridley's attack on More is consistently maintained, and the full panoply of academic pedantry could be mustered in criticism of such opinions as that More was "an unscrupulous liar"; that he outdid his fellow-persecutors "in malice"; thanks, apparently, to a religious glib complex; that his anti-heretical writings were "the scribbles of a dirty-minded schoolboy on a lavatory wall"; that he "forged a letter"; that he would resort "to any means" in Henry

VIII's service; and that he "fawned on Wolsey" and "acted as boots", then callously promoted Cardinal's murder by all means in the first session of the Reformation Parliament. To take up the question of More's relationship with Wolsey, which has obvious implications for the double biography, we are reminded that More was eager to carve out a career, that he was polite, was deferential, to Wolsey, and that he served for several years as Wolsey's "man at Court". However, it is More who is the sycophant, for there is evidence to the contrary. More opposed Wolsey's French war in 1522; he pleaded for peace before the Council in 1525, defying Wolsey. More enjoyed no real power before 1529, and this was precisely because he was not Wolsey's henchman, *because* he was no pillar of the Cardinal's régime.

Robert Whittington's encomium that More was "a man for all seasons" applies equally to Thomas Wolsey and Thomas More. As Ridley concludes, both men can be imagined holding public office in the twelfth, or thirteenth, or fourteenth, or fifteenth century. Wolsey was the village power-politician, and this aspect of his profile is well delineated. More was an embattled idealist, the village turned conscientious objector. As Ridley rightly argues, More's moral was certainly not the product of immaculate conception depicted by his son-in-law William Roper; we must avoid making More a saint too soon. But too many of Ridley's own so-called "facts" are simply value-judgements in disguise. His case for the prosecution does not convince. One does not have to be a Catholic to respect More; a man prepared to suffer for his ever "truth" he had discovered *posteriori* that, for him, at least, the truth was not illusory. Yet the moral is ultimately controversial: the full arbitrament must be left to posterity.

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# The reputation of a great dictator

Norman Del Mar

DENIS MATTHEWS

Arturo Toscanini  
With selected discography by  
Ray Burford  
176pp. Tunbridge Wells: Midas  
Books. £9.50.  
0 85936 1721

It should be said at once that this book is an excellent and thoroughly well-presented example of its kind. The biographical matter is, to the best of my knowledge, well researched and commendably exhaustive. There are also some splendid photographs of the great maestro, both formal and intimate.

But it is with the genre itself that I am, as so often, out of sympathy; although generally a devotee of books dealing with the lives of creative artists, I tend to shy off adulatory biographies of performers. The author's standpoint of unqualified admiration is here largely to blame. Admittedly this failing may also be present in many composers' biographies, but rarely to the same extent, and there is a further crucial difference: unlike the work of the great creative artist, that of the interpreter is essentially ephemeral and his ultimate place in the hierarchy of his kind will depend upon whatever mystique has grown up around him. Recordings might be thought to perpetuate the performer's achievements but this is often an illusion and the reality can, on the contrary, be disturbing if one listens with unprejudiced ears to, for example, the spate of LP dubbings recently released from tapes made of numerous Toscanini performances without his specific sanction. Often they do poor service to the memory of a conductor who has been held to be one of the greatest, sincerest and most dedicated artists who ever lived.

It was perhaps his misfortune that universal acclaim made such an idol of him. His image was hardly less than alarming: he was the unique example of an interpreter who was absolutely faithful to the composer's vision down to the very letter of the score; he was a terrifying personality — but only to the mediocre, to whom he could indeed be a tyrant in his selfless pursuit of the ideal, though with himself he was never satisfied and was heard to let fall touching words of self-abasement; and he was gifted with a prodigious memory.

This formidable list of characteristics needs, however, to be examined in detail. For although Toscanini's readings were certainly hailed in the 1930s for their refreshingly strict and objective approach, he was by no means invariably faithful to the printed score. Living in an age of self-indulgence which not only gave free rein to personalized interpretations but



Toscanini by Caruso

destroyed by his antics: the shouting, the baton-breaking and so on. Behaviour of this kind is no longer expected from the conductor in his relationship with orchestras; but the fact that the legends concerning Toscanini's tantrums are still recounted with such admiration, as marks of his very genius, is another area which needs exposure and a balanced view taken in the light of hindsight.

No doubt Toscanini was tortured by a sense of inadequacy both in himself and his players; but to quote in reverential terms his acknowledged "I am myself sometimes terrible" in performances of, say, the Choral Symphony, is naive. Of course he was dissatisfied with himself, as is every performer of quality, but such humility can appear ingenious in the mouth of a musician acknowledged pre-eminence who may not be above showing off, perhaps, with an all too human desire for reassurance from the surrounding sycophants.

It has long been known that Toscanini's habit of always conducting from memory was the result of his excessively poor eyesight. By dint of his unchallenged authority as a prince of conductors this initiated a vogue and it became required of all first-rank conductors to do likewise. This became for a time so mandatory that it distorted and even damaged many a career and indeed the integrity of the very art itself.

Toscanini did have a prodigious memory; like Georges Enesco he had from childhood possessed the extraordinary ability to recite back long passages after only one reading.

But at the same time it does not from all accounts seem to have been the total recall of, for example, Mitropoulos who was gifted with a perfect photographic memory — the latter partially developed during his years spent within a monastery. Mitropoulos's memorized repertoire, therefore, was virtually unlimited; Toscanini's, though large and including operas with which he had been familiar all his life, could not be so comprehensive. One would therefore have greatly valued some insight into the ways — arduous no doubt — by which over the years he strove to add to it.

While Toscanini's star quality may reasonably be allowed to stand undimmed, it seems out of order to pretend that all his performances were of uniformly sterling quality. I always remember Professor Matthews commenting that in the opening of Brahms's Tragic Overture Toscanini made it sound like "Damn... Blast" where other conductors only played it as "There... there". Yet "Damn... Blast" was not what Brahms had meant to say; it was too ferocious and out of style. Similarly recordings reveal many of Toscanini's performances to have been ill-balanced, of a hard timbre, and relentless to a degree. The orchestra plays for all it is worth, often as if demerited. In the hall at the time the experience of each concert must have been electrifying; perpetuated on disc the results are often disastrous.

There is another failing of which Matthews and Burford are guilty which reads its ugly head again and again in the book but especially, of course, in the chapter "Toscanini and the Critics". It does ill service to a great artist to treat all adverse criticism as if it

were sacrilegious: "One Beecham supporter would have us believe," quotes Ray Burford dismissively, "the Overture La Scala di San producers ladder of steel, not of silk," and goes on to disparage Beecham's over-refined reading. But the remark rebounds on itself, for whatever view one may take of Beecham's diametrically opposite approach, the attack on Toscanini remains justified.

It is only in the handful of recordings made in the earlier days of the twentieth century, 1929 and 1934, on the very few occasions when Toscanini was persuaded into the studio, that one does get a fleeting impression of what he must have been like in his days of greatest maturity and humanity. At this makes one the more regretful that in Ray Burford's over-generous discography a sharper distinction is not made between these recordings and the very many dubbings made of Toscanini's performances of the later years.

Denis Matthews has always been a whole-hearted admirer of Toscanini and this book clearly is, as he himself says, a labour of love. Each phase of the fabulous career is glowingly recounted in detail, coloured by the expressions of astonished adulation strewn like flowers along his path by the great international singers, soloists and composers. But the picture is too one-sided and as a result fails to bring to life either the artist or the music. Nevertheless this is, within its own terms of reference, a splendid and well-documented tribute to a man whom many still remember as the unchallengeable doyen of conductors.

## Glimpses of essential impurity

Paul Driver

HANS WERNER HENZE

Music And Politics: Collected  
Writings 1953-81  
286pp. Faber. £15.  
0 571 11719 8

This is an admirably produced, fluently translated collection of Henze's writings in prose — in the form of lectures, essays and programme notes — and (a good many) edited interviews over the past three decades. Some of the pieces are mere snippets, others substantial essays on aesthetics; the less theoretical ones tend to be engagingly and even stylishly written; the range is wide and includes music that is valuably anecdotal. The whole is intended by the publisher to stimulate "a positive re-evaluation of (Henze's) works in the English-speaking world".

It certainly makes one try. The Henze persona that comes through is so likeable and so reasonably enthusiastic that one racks one's conscience for a just evaluation. Yet there is an unshakeable conviction that Henze's music can never quite have a positive place in musical tradition. It isn't sufficiently itself for that; no single item of his vast and growing oeuvre carries a full impress of personality in the "definitive" way in which every product of Stravinsky's pen, however slight, was utterly his. A bitter paradox, for Henze is certainly one of the lavishly endowed talents of the century, as good at composing as Mahler and with an ambition and apparent sense of responsibility that ought to have secured his greatness. Like Mahler he indulges a bewildering array of influences and styles but unlike him he does not make a specific musical virtue of cross-reference and inclusiveness. The result is a blurred boundary, where for all his defence of eclecticism and *poesia impura*, for all the passing felicity of his writing, the ear and the memory cannot register essential musical points. (The huge Second Piano Concerto, for example, eludes my grasp after more than a decade of struggle.)

These chapters sometimes betray the same lack of certainty and confidence (attributes which can also be variously interpreted as naivety and

loneliness) that undermines the music. Henze's very air of dedication is suspect. He is too intent on pursuing the conventional paths and adopting the conventional manners of greatness; he exposes himself too dutifully to the "right" sort of aesthetic influences and political anxieties. On many pages he flourishes exquisite bouquets of source-material or analogies for his compositions; these flowers have an artificial feel. Elsewhere his dismayed sympathy for political victims ("I sympathized with my black friends but didn't know what I should do") is merely precious. Even the lack of pretension which distinguishes all but the theoretical stuff rings false. Stravinsky (to cite again a master for whom Henze is in every way nostalgic) was full of it. But the path he carved was novel; nobody ever knew where he was going; but now Henze is going there too.

Henze is in his way starstruck and perhaps he has also remained psychologically unsettled by early experiences in Nazi and post-war Germany. (The opening autobiographical sketch, frank and revealing, is the best thing in the book, throughout which Henze rightly never loses an opportunity to draw attention to the insidious persistence of fascism in Germany in times when it has become *passé* to raise the subject at all.) In his case, trauma has had a diffusive rather than the reverse effect on the development of genius, as was confirmed later when during a crisis of identity and conscience he joined Rudi Dutschke's New Left in the mid-1960s and began to squander his creative talents even more recklessly in works like *The Raft of the Medusa*. Much discussion and gossip has been provoked by Henze's radicalization but I do not think its significance was other than that of a symptom. He is unchanged by it, only his rhetoric has changed. The overtly political statements in this book do not deny familiarity with his previous creative path for him an enhanced (if by now outlived) role. In spite of the manifesto-like titles of the political chapters, their content is largely anecdotal and descriptive.

The theoretical issue that runs through the book like a leaf on a stream (never to be grasped) concerns the possibility of defining and creatively exploiting a musical semantics. Henze, like Deryck Cooke, is convinced that

instrumental music, with or without texts (and never to be demagogued "abstract"), communicates through a specific number of "signs" about whose meaning there is agreement... when strength rests on the fact that they are deeply impressed themselves on human consciousness". This credo, chiefly articulated in the chapters "Art and the Revolution" and the opposite "Signs" (as also in Henze's preface to recent London concert of his latest works), informs every aspect of his thinking — his defiance from the outset of Darmstadt serial orthodoxy, his belief in the essential "impurity" of music where any means should be used to facilitate communication, his later view of such impurity as pertaining directly to a Marxist aesthetic. It is tantalizingly unexpanded; although Henze would naturally prefer to develop his theory through his continuing practice.

A great deal of space is given to useful commentaries on Henze's operas — two each on *König David* and *Elegy for Young Lovers*, three each on *Der junge Lord* and *The Bassariki*. Much can be gleaned from them; and the ballad *Orpheus and Eurydice* as well as the three pieces of committed "political music", *El Cimarrón* and *Hetsche Ungeheuer*, receive ample and enlightening explanation. If "The Message of Music" (1959) represents an extreme of unreadability (a hard lecture incorporating an enormous and impenetrable quotation from Hegel), the chapter on the Montepulciano Cantata 1976-80 finds Henze delightfully chatty and informative. His appreciations of Puccini, Debussy, Benjamin Britten and Vincent d'Indy are interesting; the little programme-note on Mahler brilliant of its kind. An early newspaper statement "Wavering and Positionless" (1957) puts a neat case for himself: "My certainty lies in my wavering, my wavering is ambivalence about a world that has populated itself with people whose papers are all in order." I almost believe that.

Alfred Brendel's *Musical Thought and Afterthoughts* has recently been reissued in paperback (1980). Its 300 pages, £3.95, 0 86051 187 1, includes chapters on Beethoven's and Schubert's piano sonatas, and essays on Liszt and of Busoni, as well as reminiscences of Brendel's teacher Edwin Fischer.

LEON EDEL

Stuff of Sleep and Dreams:  
Experiments in Literary Psychology  
352pp. Chatto and Windus. £15.  
0 7011 39036

"Franz Kafka used to say that writing was a form of prayer. Of course this is not so for most writers, but it was for him, and his saying this tells us a good deal about his troubles." The import of Leon Edel's latest book is that few writers find it possible to say anything at all without telling us their troubles. Even their little jokes and evasions may have thought that he was mocking the curiosity of his readers, but "the way in which he does it tells us a great deal about his problems."

"If we pierce any artist's legend", Edel claims, "we discover an all-too-human human." Piercing the artist, and the "human" behind the artist, he discovers an all-too-troubled legend. The legend is called "literary psychology".

Literary psychology seeks the emotions and the *persona* within the work as distinct from the person of the artist. It is an attempt to study the metamorphoses of the unconscious materials of literary art into conscious image and symbol; and the metamorphoses of fancy into the finished work shaped by language and tradition.

The finished work re-imagines or re-enacts the troubles of the life, and thus assists the writer to come to terms with them.

We remember Freud's account of a game played by his grandson, in which the child compensated himself for the absence of his mother by staging the disappearance and return of objects within his reach. "At the outset he was in a passive situation — he was overpowered by the experience; but, by repeating it, unpleasant though it was, as a game, he took on an active part." Edel characterizes the work of Thomas, Kipling, Joyce, T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, Willa Cather and others as a kind of cathartic game, a way of mastering traumatic experiences.

It is a powerful legend, ambitious in scope yet accessible to common experience. Edel means, I think, to test both its explanatory power and its aesthetic power. How much does it explain about the process of selection and reproduction which transforms unconscious motive into poem or novel? And even if it cannot be shown to explain anything, does it contribute to the pleasure we take in literature? The first initiative requires the legend to produce hypotheses which can be tested against the available literary and psychological evidence. The second allows it to remain an article of faith, but insists that it is a more useful article of faith than some others.

Edel often settles for the second and less arduous initiative. Even so, he does make large claims for the status of literary psychology as a discipline. "It is," he says, "the very secret of scientific literary truth that any method we have found so far... Perhaps, but it may leave the rest of us wondering to know how it will cope with two crucial problems: the identification of unconscious motive, and the description of the way in which unconscious motive becomes language and form."

The psychological evidence from which he can deduce unconscious motive is said to include "dreams, imaginings, and observed human actions." Some chapters of *Stuff of Sleep and Dreams* are therefore essays in biography. Others are essays in biography based with reflections on the many ways in which parents contrive to ruin the lives of their children: looking them out of the house (Kafka's father), taking them to visit ponds (Thoreau's mother), living in hotels (Henry James's father), dying (Julia Stephen).

In so far as the evidence concerns dreams and imaginings, literary psychology exceeds biography. But one may doubt whether it always exceeds biography in the direction of

scientific literary truth. Edel seems to think that it is possible to identify an unconscious motive by making explicit what biographers have chosen to leave implicit. Unfortunately, though, his explicitness often produces emblems rather than aetiologies. Take, for example, his treatment of sexual imaginings.

An earlier book, *Bloomsbury: A House of Lions*, had contained the gratifyingly emblematic Lytton Strachey, a precocious satyr in girl's clothing: "under those petticoats there was a proud and active phallus, even if the child looked increasingly as if he would be a Victorian spinster". This sudden vision of popping seams is both too much and too little. It jars with the otherwise sedate narrative, making explicit what we could have imagined for ourselves. And yet it explains nothing.

*Stuff of Sleep and Dreams* offers Auden's dreams of castration and Eliot's stanza about masturbation (in "The Death of Saint Narcissus", as it happens). It also proposes "illuminate" the psychopathology of James Joyce by citing passages from letters he wrote to Nora. "Krafft-Ebing pervasions", warns Edel, "nauseating" to some readers, a "wallowing in excrement", "erotic sickness". "The sensitive civilized reader will cry Enough!" he concludes, after two lengthy quotations from letters in which Joyce's sexual imagining of his wife does not confine itself to the missionary position.

These quotations are so carefully framed by commentary that they cannot fail to illuminate Edel's moral obsessions rather more than they do Joyce's psychopathology. They have been removed from their context — from the relationship which provoked and assimilated them — in order to serve as emblems of (Edel's perception of) Joyce's depravity. Indeed, the depravity spreads by implication to Richard Ellmann, who is assigned for publishing the letters and for trying to pass them off as literature. Yet Ellmann's introduction to the *Selected Letters* is admirably sensitive not only to the difference between letters and novels, but to the reasons Joyce's scurrility found in his life: "With Nora there was the possibility available to him nowhere else, of complete self-revelation, a great relief to a suspicious man". Edel may brandish his emblem, but it is Ellmann who makes the better attempt at an aetiology.

If Edel's identification of unconscious motive seems shaky, so does his description of the way in which unconscious motive becomes language and form. Take the chapter on T. S. Eliot. Eliot surely provides a suitable case for literary psychology, since his most famous poem was written during a personal crisis, and is generally assumed to re-enact that crisis. (Anyway, didn't the man write an essay called "Hamlet and His Problems"?)

Edel promises an "adumbration" of Eliot's crisis and its reworking as *The Waste Land*. On the whole he adumbrates rather less well than Lytton Gordon has already done in *Eliot's Early Years*, a book he does not mention (although I was intrigued to find Ezra Pound cast as Eliot's father and mother). But there is a potentially significant change of emphasis. Whereas Gordon sees Eliot's crisis as mediated primarily by religious idiom, Edel proposes to explore the psychology of Roger Vittoz, who treated Eliot in Lausanne in November 1920. After all, Eliot wrote much of "What the Thunder Said" in Lausanne, and it would be interesting to know what he was actually doing there.

However, Edel confines himself to some gossip about Vittoz's ability to sense the brain waves of his patients simply by touching their foreheads. Ottoline Morrell, we learn, "had liked Vittoz's attentiveness, his poise, his way of asking her to sort out her instincts". Perhaps these manoeuvres also had a soothing effect on what is referred to as "the Eliot selfhood". Perhaps Eliot's instincts (or "instincts") were sorted out, "with the result that he had a grip on himself once more".

## Looking for trouble

David Trotter

Edel ignores the theory behind the banal practice, and so misses the point that Vittoz cannot have told Eliot anything he didn't already know. Vittoz held that the mind has two "working centres", subjective and objective, "the subjective brain is in a general way the source of the ideas and sensation, and... the objective brain in a sense 'focuses' them."

Neurosthenia occurs when one working centre fails to focus the ideas and sensations produced by the other. Which could hardly have been news to the author of "Prufrock", or to the critic who spoke of the artist as an eye patiently observing himself as a man. The clinic at Lausanne must have seemed like a rest-home for Gerontions.

For the psychology of the time should not be considered as a science witnessing to the unique truth of an individual psyche, but as a collective representation, a legend by means of which a particular culture could tell itself its troubles. On more than one occasion the ideas of the artist found an echo in those of the psychologist. Eliot thought that this conjunction had helped to create a new kind of literature. "Psychology (such as it is, and whether our reaction to it comes or serious), ethnology, and the Golden Rule" have conspired, he wrote in 1923, "to make possible what was impossible even a few years ago."

In exploring the mediation of personal crisis by psychology, we should remember that its legitimacy was collective and historical, and that Eliot, for one, didn't know how seriously to take it.

Similar difficulties arise in another case where literary psychology might have hoped to succeed. Edel is on firm ground when he argues that Willa Cather's novel *The Professor's House* might be said to re-enact the sense of helplessness and betrayal she felt when her friend Isabelle McClung married the violinist Jan Hambourg. The biographical evidence is strong. I have no difficulty in following Edel when he suggests that the professor's loss of his wife to live was Cather's, unexplained in the novel because she could not explain it herself; or when he suggests that the story of Tom Outland — a student of the professor who discovers a cave city in the high mesa, but is robbed of his finds by a companion — re-enacts Cather's own sense of betrayal.

Even so, both characters have cultural as well as autobiographical resonances. Edel refers Cather's statement that "the world broke in two in 1922 or thereabouts" entirely to a personal crisis. But the context of the statement, in the preface to *Not Under Forty*, makes it clear that the reference is to cultural crisis. The professor's loss of will and Outland's sense of betrayal echo off the representations of that larger crisis.

The professor has something in common with Gustav von Aschenbach, Outland with Yeats's Robert Gregory. These figures reinforce each other in our mind, as they perhaps did in Cather's, and we need to recognize their cultural dimension.

I would not press the objection, if Edel's analysis of unconscious motive had succeeded in illuminating the texture of the novel, I would not press it, for example, against John Carey's book on Dickens, *The Violent Effigy*. Carey understates the scope of Dickens's imagining of social process, his reliance on collective representations. But he nevertheless works backward and forward between the novels and obsessions revealed in events or letters until he has isolated patterns and qualities in the writing which we would not otherwise have noticed. He shows us a reason for Dickens's greatness. Edel, on the other hand, never deploys to such effect the aesthetic power of the legend which connects creative impulse with obsession.

His psychological glosses tend to obscure rather than clarify. Thus we learn that the caves discovered by Tom Outland are "for a seemingly virgin untouched, like a seemingly virgin mother preserved from others, a mother of long ago, of the infant years, who belonged only to the child greedily

at her breast". One of these involute cave-mothers turns out to contain the corpse of a woman executed for adultery. Later, after the betrayal, Outland drives his companion away and "spends a period among the caves — that is, with his mother — as blissful as a babe". What he in fact does while supposedly in search of a warm nest is to read the *Aeneid*. The psychological paradigm has obliterated important emphasis in the novel (on primitive violence, on imperial myths).

Taken as a whole, these experiments in literary psychology disappoint less because of their failure to explain the creative process than because of their clumsy handling of texts. Worst of all in this respect is the essay on Joyce, more a vendetta than an exercise in criticism. Edel records his youthful adulation, and his dawning disillusionment. Now he wants to reassess Joyce's achievement, to claim that Joyce was "hugely overshadowed" by Yeats and Eliot and Virginia Woolf, and that his place in the Irish renaissance was not with a "supreme artist" like Yeats but with "wits and public entertainers" like Shaw and Wilde. The author of *Ulysses* was not interested in the mysteries of existence, but in "word matching and word combinations, the higher pedantry cultivated by certain types of Irish nationalists, usually in pubs".

The reputation is there to be quarrelled with, of course. But one would expect any major reassessment at least to acknowledge the pleasure Joyce has given to hundreds of readers by arraying the idioms through which various experiences might have been articulated in early twentieth-century Dublin. Edel does no such thing. Instead, he argues that Joyce was a vain and egocentric man deeply wounded by the world's indifference to him, who gained his revenge by perpetrating byzantine fictions which only scholars can make sense of. Joyce wrote "not for literature but for personal revenge". He built "interminable mazes" in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. "These were so personal, so secretive, and so masturbatory, that his reader remained bewildered until he explained what he had done."

Describe the villainess of the man and you describe the villainess of the work. "The flaws in his personality are the flaws in his art."

There has never been any mystery about Joyce's self-centredness. But if you are going to use this criticism of the man in order to criticize the writing, you must surely say what it is in the writing that corresponds to the flaws in the man. But Edel hardly discusses the writing at all. We are left to construe the masturbatory mazes for ourselves.

The little discussion there is somehow lacks the air of scientific literary truth. Edel complains about Joyce writing from Trieste or Zurich to ask one of his sisters to count the steps down to the kitchen at No 7 Eccles Street. This, he says contemptuously, is "flatfooted pollockwork" — the

imagination ousted in favour of reportage or record".

No one could accuse Edel of flatfooted pollockwork, since Joyce was in fact writing from Paris to ask his aunt whether "an ordinary person" could drop into the area of No 7 "without getting hurt. Nor could one really accuse him of literary criticism, since he doesn't seem curious about the function of reportage within the novel as a whole. Was not reportage one of the idioms through which experience might have been articulated in Dublin in 1904? He simply takes it for granted that the imagination should not stoop to literalness.

The assumption reminds us that Edel has been the chronicler of a distinctly patrician strain in English and American literature — Henry James, Bloomsbury — and that he has held correspondingly extreme views about the remoteness of intellectual life from the mean and commonplace. "An intelligence," he once wrote of Maynard Keynes,

that leaps, soars and ruthlessly cuts a swathe, if necessary, through the world's clutter, is particularly unpopular with the less gifted, for the commonplace is usually irrational... How can such an intelligence have patience with the sleepy woolgatherers, the eternal fumbler?

It is possible that Joyce's crime, in Edel's eyes, may not have been his egocentricity but his consorting with the eternal fumbler, with the plebeian literalness of pollockwork.

At times his assessment of Joyce is contemptuous enough to recall that of Virginia Woolf, who thought *Ulysses* "underbred", the book of "a self taught working man" or "a queasy undergraduate scratching his pimples". Her attitude certainly had little to do with experiment, with literature, or with psychology.

The final irony is that Joyce himself should have been one of Edel's most notable precursors as a literary psychologist, maintaining enthusiastically that the troubles of his life, however, when Stephen Dedalus expounds these views in the National Library, they are placed as just one way among several of approaching literature. They impress, but they are certainly not the whole story. Mulligan jeers, Bloom remains safely out of earshot, while Stephen himself does not seem to have total confidence in them. "Do you believe your own theory?" — No, Stephen said promptly.

Volume Four of *Comparative Criticism: a yearbook*, edited by E. S. Shaffer, has recently been published (348pp. Cambridge University Press. £25. 0 521 24578 8). Among the contributors are Roger Scruton on "Public text and common reader", Sir Michael Tippett on "The Mask of Time: Work in progress", and Anthony Visis on *The Empress of Newfoundland* by Frank Wedekind.

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## commentary

## New faces of an ancient world

J. B. Donne

Treasures of Ancient Nigeria  
Royal Academy

Following *The Gold of Eldorado* and *The Great Lagoon Exhibition*, the Royal Academy has once again welcomed to its galleries some of the greatest masterpieces of non-European art, this time from the continent of Africa. *Treasures of Ancient Nigeria* (open until January 23) consists of 100 of Nigeria's finest works of art spanning a period of over 2,000 years, from the fifth century BC to the mid-nineteenth century. Since the majority of these pieces have never left Africa before and are unlikely to do so again in our lifetime, this is a unique opportunity to discover an area of African art little enough known, at first hand, to specialists, and bound to attract and astonish all who view it.

The visitor's immediate response is amazement at finding such humanism and naturalism in the commemorative heads and busts. Facial features are softened, the eyes stare out into space, the heavy lips are sensually everted, and we seem to be going on individuals in a state of reflection or repose. If, as has been suggested, some of the heads were attached to simulacra at second burials to replace the actual head of the deceased, this would account for the naturalism. But an elephant too is most realistically an elephant, with its trunk ringed with creases and its tusks sprouting from the flesh, even if its eyes are somewhat humanized. This is not the African art to which the general public is accustomed: with its wooden masks and figure carvings (often still vulgarly referred to as "fetiches"), constricted and distorted in their proportions, conceived with menace and fraught with fear.

Here indeed we have the skeleton of Nigerian art, largely unearthed by archaeologists in fairly recent years. Gone are all the woodcarvings, long since rotted by the rains or destroyed by the insect world. What remain are the traditions of court art and shrine furniture composed of brass, bronze

and copper, ivory and stone, and terracotta.

The oldest objects are the Nok terracottas, dated between 500 BC and 200 AD, found in the central plateau, sometimes on the surface, sometimes as much as forty feet deep in the tin mines. A single style pervades the area and the time span, the lips, nostrils, orbits and ears pierced, giving an air of alertness which is surprising if these heads once formed part of funerary furniture. Even more surprising is the variety of form - spherical, conical, cylindrical - within the style, and again the individuality of the faces and the diversity of coiffures, none of which is ever repeated.

But the highlight of the exhibition is likely to be the collection of bronze castings from Igbo-Ukwu, a small village a few miles from the left bank of the Lower Niger. These have been dated by the radiocarbon technique to the ninth to tenth centuries AD. Some of the pieces were associated with a royal burial, others with a dejected shrine. Their immediate appeal must be due to the overall, but seldom overloaded, surface decoration of fine lines, spirals, guilloches and enhanced triangles, which were first added as wax threads to the mould that formed the basis of the *cire-perdue* casting. The forms themselves are often taken from the world of nature - vessels in the shape of calabash or snail-shell, regalia developed out of a coiled snake, a bird and its eggs - but a human head with a high dressed coiffure provides a delightful miniature pendant.

The finest of all the Igbo-Ukwu bronzes, and perhaps the finest piece in the exhibition, represents a clay pot bound to a metal stand by interlocking ropes. Immense skill is required to cast such a complex object and details still baffle the experts who have had an opportunity of studying it scientifically. An investigation carried out some years ago at the British Museum revealed that at least four pieces had had to be cast separately by the *cire-perdue* method and then joined together with metallic run-in. The result is not only a supreme example of the bronze-caster's art, but also a work of great aesthetic beauty, perfectly balanced in its proportions. The pot bears an intricate but restrained decoration of wavy lines on

the rim and guilloches at neck and belly which contrast with the openwork rosette of the base. All this forms a background to the pattern of reef knots on the encircling rope. However, a human element has been allowed to creep in. Despite the apparent technical perfection there is an error: one knot is tied to nothing and would be impossible in real rope.

Incomparable as it is, and partly for that very reason, the art of Igbo-Ukwu does not fit in with that of the rest of Nigeria. But at life from the twelfth to fifteenth century we enter the classic tradition of portrait heads, busts and figures of kings, queens and court officials who actually lived. Their look of concentration or introspection can often be seen today on African faces caught in a reflective mood. But alongside this naturalism we find the human form so abstracted that it resembles an elemental chessman or a pepper-pot as shown by a piece from Abini. The contrast is far greater in both directions than between Epstein's heads and his "Rock Drill".

Whether life was directly responsible for the introduction of bronze-casting into Benin or not, life influence can certainly be seen in the fifteenth-century terracottas of Owu. Benin art is well known in this country, particularly since the large exhibition held in the Museum of Modern Art when it was first opened in 1970. But the provincial art is less familiar, and a head in Udo style, quite possibly female, has a sweet charm that is lacking in the more formal style of Benin proper. Finally, the seated figure from Tada, the finest example of life art (if indeed it did originate in life) and the bronze figures of a warrior and a Bowman, are unique. Speculation has done little towards elucidating their true place of manufacture and significance. We can but admire them for their technical verve, detailed surface decoration, and general impressiveness.

One important point this exhibition makes, though it is nowhere overtly stated, is that Igbo-Ukwu in the tenth century, African bronze-casting was far in advance of anything being achieved in Europe. For this reason alone it is important to visit the Royal Academy.

everything he has neglected for his work. He is now supposed to become a fuller, more liberated person able to "empathize" and enjoy "meaningful human relationships". The spectacle is both hilarious and sad; as Stuart's own vulnerability becomes increasingly obvious. In Williamson's hands, O'Neill's doctrine of open marriage is exposed as more destructive than creative because it is based on such an optimistically naïve and sentimental conception of human nature. At the end of the play, after Barbara has had an affair with Erik, Stuart and Barbara are left with their illusions crumbling and their marriage in danger of total collapse.

Williamson is often considered to be a topical dramatist and *The Perfectionist* is clearly about issues that currently attract plenty of attention, such as "does marriage have a future?" But through this and related issues such as feminism and sexism, dangers inherent in idealism, the aspiration to create perfection in the realm of the human. If *The Perfectionist* is at heart a serious play presenting an essentially pessimistic view of human yearnings and limitations, it does so with a wealth of verbal wit and comic invention. Williamson certainly walks an artistic tightrope throughout *The Perfectionist* between a keen desire to balance seriousness and comedy. Rodney Fisher's brilliant direction of the play using Sharon Clurman's minimalist stylized set succeeds in bringing out the deeper, more serious aspects of the verbal fireworks while maximizing the comic potential.



A pair of bronze leopards of the Benin period, from the exhibition reviewed here.

## Handel in the hammam

Timothy McFarland

G. F. HANDEL

Xerxes  
Sadler's Wells

Discussion of the merits and defects of *opera seria* (in contrast to the wholesale rejection which was normal not so very long) has become more urgent and better-informed as performances of baroque operas have increased in number and improved in the quality of production and musical performance. In the context of Gluck and Mozart the genre itself is under attack and anachronistic, and their musical language has developed in a way that changes the nature of the dramatic problem and its possible solutions. But it has become increasingly difficult to argue from those later decades that *opera seria* was always sterile or unperformable when we have seen such manifestly successful performances of Handel operas - even if we assume that Monteverdi and Cavalli are excluded by the terms of the debate. As the new production of *Xerxes* by the Handel Opera Society makes clear, the audience is no longer being invited to inspect an exhausted historical curiosity or to make any allowances; we are if anything being asked to agree that the work holds its own against later operatic comedies more firmly established in the standard repertoire.

The action is mainly concerned with the change of fortune and mood affecting five lovers, one of whose number is a capricious absolute monarch. Arsamenes and Romilda, who love each other, are threatened both by his brother Xerxes, who decides to marry Romilda himself, and by his sister Atalanta, who has decided to capture Arsamenes for herself. To this neatly symmetrical group of four high voices (the two male roles are sung by counter-tenors at alto pitch) is added Amastrius, the betrothed of Xerxes, who arrives in male disguise to see what he is up to. The rapid succession of often farcical situations and the serious emotional responses of the characters to them are expressed in a score of extraordinary inventiveness and variety, moving swiftly and without confusion through forty-odd numbers; less than half of these are full *da capo* forms; some are extremely short, often without *ripieno*, and the orchestration is light and economical, limited for the most part to strings and continuo.

Under Charles Farncombe's direction the accumulated sparkle of the company in matters of Handelian style is evident in a performance of high musical standard. For it to be dramatically convincing, it is essential that the title role should be forcefully presented; for the action springs entirely from the behaviour of Xerxes

which is at times dangerously menacing and not merely capricious as petulant James Bowman conveys the demands of the role with great strength and beauty of tone, ranging with memorable variety from a charming opening non-Largo to the magnificent formal aria of rage in Act 3. Beside him as Arsamenes Robert Martin Oliver does justice to the delicacy of the predominantly elegiac role. The rival sisters of Lydia Russell and Sandra Dugdale are subtle contrasted in vocal timbre and characterization and both are delightful.

The problems of production posed by any *opera seria* are diminished when the action moves as rapidly as it does here. Tom Hawkes and his design team have chosen to match Peter Rice have chosen to match the visual detail and stage business. The opera is given an opulent Ottoman setting, with bright costumes in the Tiepolo-oriental style and more restrained septa and grey-streaked decorations with a charming patchwork of the Holbein style. The end of Act 1 in a desert of pedicure and massage filigree, the *da capo* stretches for over an hour, a production device for overblown static effect of a lengthy baroque act. This is useful enough in an operatic comedy. Similar devices occur elsewhere in the production (including a full scene-changing in mid-act) but are mostly used with restraint and not at all in the heroic and passionate episodes.

Nevertheless their overall effect is slightly disconcerting, in that for stretches we feel that we are moving in the world of Rossini or Donizetti, a world of feeling that Handel does not suffer from such comparisons musically; more interestingly, Xerxes does not suffer from them dramatically or psychologically either. A most suitable stylistic model for production might be *Cost fan Tutte*, which also suffers if the producer imposes too much distracting business. Handel's libretto, however, remodelled from a text already set by Cavalli eighty years previously, left him free to do what he pleased. Metastasio's straitjacket but provided nothing in the way of comic support to compare with Da Ponte's elegantly demonstrated theories.

The question of whether a number of Handel's operas should not by now be taken their place in our permanent repertoire could scarcely be asked fifteen years ago. It is very largely due to the Handel Opera Society that it can be asked. There is also a danger that Handel's operas will be considered to be a corollary of the Baroque, a group of specialists will be clear that we have gone beyond this phase. The Society might feel able to turn to other neglected baroque masters, especially to Alessandro Scarlatti.

## Arms and the ideal society

Richard Brain

G. B. SHAW  
Major Barbara  
Lyttelton Theatre

Mr Bernard Shaw  
We just setting out for the war,  
When he heard it was a dangerous trade  
And demonstrably underpaid.

So wrote E. Clitherow Bentley in his *Biography for Beginners* (1905). Though it is too instructive, perhaps, to be a good derivative, that sounds the way Shaw. But in November the same year Shaw was presenting to the London public Andrew Undershaft, the millionaire arms manufacturer (whose antagonist and daughter is the heroine of *Major Barbara*), forcefully and impressively advocating not only capitalist creation of wealth but also the use of armed force to achieve desired ends. "Nothing is ever done in this world until men are prepared to kill one another if it is not done" was the slogan that his predecessor and master in the inherited arms business had inscribed in his factory. "The hellion paper that really governs the age that has a bullet wrapped in it," Undershaft argues near the end of the play, anticipating by almost exactly thirty-three years Mao Tse-tung's "only Mao's planning was more effective".

The end Undershaft claims he dotes above all is the abolition of poverty, "the worst of crimes". War, violence and crime are not logically entailed in the pursuit of this aim, which can be achieved by individual enterprise or through statist capitalism - or even in a socialist economy - by the industrial development of gentler commodities: soap, tea, textiles, baked beans, chocolate. (In *Arms and the Man*, 1904, Shaw had countered the leader's argument that modern war depended on gunpowder by showing how much it depended on chocolate.)

The only reason why Andrew Undershaft - prop and pillar of the City in which his opulent church (alias St Andrew's Cornhill) stands - is a millionaire in armaments manufacture is Shaw's love of polarities. The real essence of the play is indeed the goodness of poverty, and in the end the fulfiling of charitable organizations that attempt merely to alleviate it by providing shelter and food for the homeless and hungry. Notable among such charities has been the Salvation Army. It was its combination of providing food and physical succour in order then to preach Christ's gospel ("a piece of bread" and then, as Snobbery Price puts it, "the peace that passeth all understanding") and its systematic organization of the military metaphor of "fight the good fight" and "Onward, Christian soldiers", that provided Shaw with the pole against which to set up the pole of the anastomosing of the vast underworld, and Lazarus, fortune by providence for the wants of real armies - not meanwhile also funding the creation of a model society and town around the weapons factory so that the material, cultural and even spiritual needs of its employees are fully met. There is no poverty there.

So the warmongering talk on Undershaft's part is incidental (though it evidently shocks a modern audience almost as much as the more reverentially performed audience at the play's first performance was shocked by Barbara's crying of Christ's words "Salvation is of the Lord" when she discovers the Salvation Army's shelter for the homeless being saved by accepting arms manufacture). It is matters like this that are so cold steeliness in Shaw's drama. The new production at the Lyttelton Theatre, looking like a *Salvation Army* (especially in Act I), is might equally be a *Salvation Army* of finance, of tin

mines; and his speeches are delivered with the unctious of a bon vivant rather than the tough precision that might suggest his scientific knowledge of "the bursting strain of a ten-inch gun, which is a very simple matter". It is a pity that he hasn't the passionate intensity to match that in Penelope Wilton's playing of Barbara: her every utterance, from kindly tolerance of her richly established but rather poorly endowed family in Act I, through her busy authoritative in her West Ham shelter, to her realization at the end that God's work (her calling) is to save souls and that it should be man's duty to save and provide for our bodies, is spoken with a challenge to disbelief and clinched, when needed, with a smile of positive purity.

For the play, like many of Shaw's, is a pantomime: the Beast turns out to be a Prince not of Darkness, but of enlightenment (if fairly despotical) and to care ultimately more about saving men for life, even for that of the spirit, than about destroying them; and the Salvation Army Beauty is won over by him to give up the mere "sally from heaven" that the West Ham shelter

represents, where she was "getting at last to think more of the collections than of the people's souls", in favour of an all-embracing campaign to save those who are materially well provided for - and even the rich, like her own family. These are parts to be played as romantic leads; and Penelope Wilton succeeds, but Brewster Mason, sometimes mumbling, stumbles.

The other parts are mouthpieces for the stuff of aphorism or newspaper articles (or cartoons): gifts for players, and most of the cast in this production are sufficiently gifted. David Yelland's Stephen Undershaft is securely this side of caricature; Brian Croucher doesn't put a fist wrong as the cockney bruiser Bill Walker; Mark Tandy gives a charm of his own to Charles Lomax's upper-class illogicality; Patricia Hayes is her characteristic self as Rummy (or Romilda - "It was out of a new book. Somebody me mother wanted me to grow up like" Mitchens, and so is Sian Phillips as Lady Britomart - but she plays the role utters and ungratefully; she looks bored when she isn't speaking. These - and other - parts are, like many in Shaw's plays,

actors to lack flesh and blood and to be merely purveyors of speeches. The character Shaw actually drew from life (from his friend Gilbert Murray), Adolphus Cusins, the Australian-born Professor of Greek (which Murray had already been at Glasgow), is the hardest to play, in its complex of classical logic and Dionysian chapsodizing - how to utter "Father Colossus - Mammoth Millionaire" after reciting some of Murray's own translated Euripidean chorus lines! - but Nicholas Jones manages drumsticks and dramatic flourishes with a great deal of adroitness and dexterity; he plays the part all right. Peter Gill both paces and places his actors well in his direction; Alison Chitty's sets are appropriate for the Edwardian opulence of Act I and the hints of *The Shape of Things to Come* in Act III (Iona Sekacz's transformation-scene music is more well than Bliss-like, however, in its orchestration of "Onward, Christian soldiers", but the Act II setting outside the Salvation Army shelter is spatially vast and wrong (despite conforming unnecessarily exactly to detail in Shaw's stage directions).

## Facile effects and frolicsome débâcles

Patricia Craig

The Agatha Christie Hour  
Thames TV

Those who have disagreed all along with Edmund Wilson's celebrated verdict on Agatha Christie - "her writing is of a mawkishness and banality which seem to me literally impossible to read" - might find their opinion on this point shaken by the current series of Christie adaptations on television. These hour-long plays are based on stories (taken mainly from two volumes, *The Hound of Death*, 1933, and *The Lighthouse Mystery*, 1934) which seem perversely chosen to display the author's shortcomings rather than her proficiency in a particular area: that of unrelenting bamboozlement. Once she stops mystifying you, Agatha Christie tends to exasperate you; take away the detective element, which imposes tightness of construction and you are left with unredeemed triteness.

The short story allowed her very little scope for performing the feat she excelled at: devising an enigma of unsurpassable intricacy. By forcing her to throw the emphasis on a single mood or incident, it fostered in this author the qualities of which Edmund Wilson justly complained, cutting out at the same time the possibility of a counterbalancing inventiveness. You find in some of the stories a very rudimentary version of a device used to better effect in the novels; in "The Red Signal", for example, the author easily tricks us into supposing that Mrs Trent (Joanna David), visibly under some fearsome pressure, is about to succumb to a homicidal mania ("My god! breathed Dermot") when in fact it is Mr Trent who is afflicted in this way. Such sleights-of-hand require a more complicated setting to make themselves felt.

The film's unavoidable verisimilitude has proved a pitfall for earlier adaptors of Agatha Christie; it is one thing to read about stock behaviour, according to a due place in the building up of an elaborate puzzle; another to have it enacted in front of you. *Murder on the Orient Express* (1934), for example, a perfectly unexceptionable and entertaining novel, becomes preposterous and tedious when it is transferred to the screen (the Sidney Lumet version, with Albert Finney as Poirot, was released in 1974). Two comparatively recent television adaptations, *Why Did I Kill?* and *The Seven Days Mystery*, get by on high spirits and ingenuity, as the novels did, but only just; a third, *Murder is Easy*, for some reason has been updated, greatly to the detriment of its atmosphere and attractiveness. To the general disbelief

aroused by any attempt to take Agatha Christie's imaginings seriously, is added a further layer of disbelief that such outlandish goings-on should be associated with the present. The 1930s, yes; they did things more picturesquely then.

"The Agatha Christie Hour", produced by Pat Sandys who adapted *The Seven Days Mystery*, at least has a feeling for pre-war gloss to its credit; it appeals to your sense of decorativeness, even while it affronts your other senses. The ten plays which make up the series are richer in flavour than the stories ever were. Quintessential villages, golf courses, railway carriages, gable-ends and cushions provide the tangible locations Agatha Christie ignored. Care has been taken to eke out the skimpier episodes with suitable trimmings. In "The Girl in the Train", for example, a comically cross-grained taxi-driver is added to the cast and the small part is given to Roy Kinnear, who knows how to make it memorable. That everything else in this play is marked by extreme silliness is more the fault of the scriptwriter than of the actors, and the scriptwriter has actually improved on the original material.

This is one of the plays which encompass a frolicsome débâcle of one sort or another; others in the series go in, more rashly, for a rather heartfelt tone. Agatha Christie, as an author whose trade depends on trickery, seldom resists the impulse to try out a piece of hoodwinking, even when it is liable to produce an exceedingly facile effect. In the jollier stories the comic "neat trick" is to engage in the pretence of poking fun at the more absurd conventions of popular literature, while actually exploiting them. "Of course," said Edward to himself (in "The Manhood of Edward Robinson"), "it's all bosh, this sort of stuff. All bosh, it is. And yet, I wonder. An idiotic adventure, you realize, is about to ensue. 'The Case of the Discontented Soldier', in which Mr Parker Pyne (Maurice Denham) manufactures a little adversity to ginger up the life of a bored ex-army major, is another example of the kind of infantile frivolity the author sometimes seems to have considered amusing. Parker, at least one literary descendant, Edith Blyton's Mr Pink Whistle, embodies a purely factitious worldliness ('I know human nature, my dear boy...'). As Poirot harped on the workings of the little grey cells, so Parker Pyne harps on statistics. You are meant to find this fobbe endearing as well as astoundingly productive.

The opening play in the series leaves you feeling despondent over the effort that has gone into so unrewarding an exercise: the story does nothing but elaborate a truism. Parker Pyne, who investigates cases of vexation, takes in hand a dejected wife (Gwen Watford) whose portly husband (Peter Jones) is in the throes of a fatuous infatuation. The solution is pretty simple: Parker Pyne employs a young man to take the wife about. And the requisite Christie twist? The wife is duped into believing the young man's heart is really tender, while the viewer is duped into thinking it isn't. This complication aside, you can find an outline of the plot in the advice columns of any lightweight magazine of the era. Thames Television brings you an animated version of the standard recommendation in such cases.

The fourth man (John Nettles), in the story of that title, collars his audience in a railway carriage and inflicts on it a thrilling account of a supernatural occurrence which ends in self-strangulation for the victim of the phenomenon. The prelude to this act, shown in a sequence of colourful flashbacks, calls for a great deal of overacting and gets it, especially from Prue Clarke as Annette Raval, the impetuous young consumptive who declines to give up the ghost. In "Magnolia Blossom" you see Ciaran Madden (playing the part of Theodore Darrell, another undervalued wife) gazing soulfully at a magnolia blossom, before renouncing a chance of happiness with an orange-grower from the Transvaal. Her no-good husband (Jeremy Clyde) is in a scrape, and she won't abandon him. Alas for her loyalty. "You pledged to love, you're skin with my body," she tells him in the end, before taking off into the night wearing an evening wrap.

This line is rather more succinct than the one Agatha Christie actually wrote: "You wanted to save your skin! save it at any cost - even at the cost of my honour!" It is part of the adaptor's task to modify the novella's more conspicuous ineptitudes. Nothing can rescue these plays from insanity, though. With high-jinks, on the one hand, and high drama, on the other, Agatha Christie enveloped the ingredients at her disposal without making them any less commonplace in essence; the television series, also with no reduction in banality, prettifies them.

On November 20 the Victoria and Albert Museum will devote a whole-day seminar to "The Sitwells as Patrons". The speakers will include Reresby Sitwell on the gardens at Renshaw, John Piper on his illustrations to *Left Hand Right Hand* and Frances Spalding on portraits of Edith Sitwell. The day will close with the showing of John Freeman's 1959 TV film *Face to Face with Edith Sitwell*.

## New Oxford books: Law

Administrative Law  
H.W.R. Wade

The rapid growth of administrative law has been called by Lord Diplock 'the greatest achievement of the English courts in my judicial lifetime'. This achievement is the theme of Professor Wade's book, which discusses a wide range of problems of legal policy and logic, and raises broad questions of great interest, such as whether there is a place for the disinterested citizen who challenges unlawful government action out of public spirit. Fifth edition £25 paperback £17.50

## Principles of Scottish Private Law

David M. Walker

The aim of this book is to provide students and practitioners of the law with a plain statement of the chief principles and rules of the private law in Scotland. In this third edition, the book has been divided into four separate volumes, and all of the material has been revised and some has been rewritten. Third edition Volume 1 £25

## The Law of Property

F.H. Lawson  
and Bernard Rudden

A reviewer of the first edition of this book found it "exhilarating... simple and unpretentious, yet profound", and noted that "the student should find it clear and stimulating, and the seasoned lawyer may well be astonished how much his understanding has been enriched". For this second edition the treatment of estates has been thoroughly revised, and particular attention is paid to the doctrine of estates and to the interlocking unity of estate, trust, fund, security, and registers. New sections cover developments in public law, perpetuities, licences, and security interests. £14 paperback £6.95

## Yearbook of European Law 1981

F.G. Jacobs

The main purpose of the yearbook is to contribute to the development of European Law (and especially the law of the European Community) by publishing substantial and original work of enduring interest. £40

## Legal Right and Social Democracy

Essays in Legal and Political Philosophy  
Neil MacCormick

These essays tackle fundamental questions of legal and political philosophy and relate them to practical questions of civil and criminal law. The author is sharply critical of elements in contemporary Marxist socialist thought, and presents a 'social democratic' view of justice, legal rights, and political obligation, opposed both to socialism and to classical liberalism. £17.50

## Oxford University Press



## Strange meetings and absences

## Simon Berry

JOHN WILSON  
For King and Country  
Dundee Repertory Theatre

STEPHEN MACDONALD  
Not About Heroes  
Glasgow Theatre Club

The scene of *For King and Country* is Flanders and the year 1917: Private Arthur Hamp is found asleep under a haystack early one autumn morning when he should have been at his post during the third battle of Ypres. He has seen his best friend blown to bits and, in a state of shell-shock, has heard that his wife has run off with someone he knew before he enlisted three years previously.

Extra rum mians, a talk with the padre, a session with the MO - these were the only palliatives on offer to one who didn't expect much justice and received none in a war whose rules he never understood. Hamp has to stand court martial, ably defended by a Soldier's Friend (Lieutenant Hargreaves, a solicitor in peacetime, winningly portrayed by Stephen MacDonal), believing that it will be too much bother for the Army to shoot him. The crux of his case lies in proving that he was temporarily of unsound mind and therefore only AWOL. If he was in his right mind and aware of his own actions, and perfectly sane, then he was a plain deserter. And so it proves to be, except that (in Wilson's revised ending - different from Losey's film) it isn't the Army that shoots him.

Hamp is a holy fool in the trenches. His state of mind is summed up by a brother officer of Hargreaves's with a military distaste for paradox: "always pretty cheerful even at times when he had no right to be - lack of imagination, I suppose." Another quotes the Scriptures: "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." In his impressive revival in the new theatre of the Dundee Rep, David Learner plays Hamp with all the trustfulness and simplicity of soul that arouse respect in others. They also voice previously suppressed thoughts about the war and

particularly about the present engagement (audible during the court martial in the second act) that was to kill half a million. The role is a rewarding one, but Learner gets away from the worn-hearted Tommy stereotype. While Hamp senses that the world is going mad around him he instinctively trusts others to set it right.

It is a mystery that the play has not been revived since it won a Play of the Year award in the late 1960s under the title *Hamp*. There is no mystery as to why Stephen MacDonal's play *Not About Heroes* played to full houses during the Edinburgh Festival and received glowing notices. It shows the strangely fruitful encounter between Siegfried Sassoon, war hero and aristocrat now obsessed with exposing every sham ideal used to justify war, and Wilfred Owen, recovering from the effects of neurasthenia attributable to shell-shock, looking desperately for a hero who was not immune to the pities of war.

They met at Craiglockhart War Hospital in Edinburgh for a few months from July 1917 and developed a close friendship. MacDonal's play also suggests a close working relationship represented by Sassoon's self amendments to Owen's "Anthem for Doomed Youth" ("He hands over poems like school exercises to be marked"). His own poetry he derides as jingles when Owen (as editor of the *Hospital Magazine*) approaches him for contributions. Sassoon (played by MacDonal himself) in a letter to the War Office had denounced the aims of the War as evil and unjust, calling for an end to further sacrifice. Ironically, he is confronted at Craiglockhart - whether he is rapidly despatched - by Owen's belief that sacrifice is essential, especially for the poet. While increasingly admiring the raw feeling and technical novelty in the younger man's work, Sassoon tries to persuade him not to go back to the front (as in *For King and Country* it is the time of Passchendaele) even trying to fix him a job in the Ministry of Information. The attempts are futile, despite the attractions of being introduced to H. G. Wells and Arnold Bennett.

In the second act both men have left Craiglockhart and for both it has become a desperate race to be first to

join the fallen. At the prospect of imminent death Owen experiences a freedom from neurosis, a feeling that by acts of heroism (the war recommended for the MC) he will prove his credentials as a poet. Sassoon, in a moment of impetuosity that was meant, I think, to be seen as attempted self-sacrifice, takes off his helmet in broad daylight between the lines and is shot in the head by a sergeant from his own side. In the spring of 1918 they meet once more, Sassoon a broken man in a wheelchair surprised at the prospect of being able to write his memoirs, and Owen about to leave for the Western Front. He gives Sassoon the first draft of "Strange Meeting" and the famous Preface to his collected poems.

The play is a convincing picture of a brief but powerful relationship, based on Owen's copious letters and the semi-autobiographical account of Sassoon's George Sherston. Writing to Graves in 1930, Sassoon says: "I had to eliminate most of my excitability and intolerance as it had to be a fair-minded account of war experience" and this detached stance is used to keep the emotional current firmly earthed in the subtext of the play.

*Not About Heroes* is skilfully directed by Eric Standidge (who also directs *For King and Country*) with the barest of sets - desks, a hat stand, two armchairs - against black drapes. The high points flash against this sombre background; the ending, when Sassoon half believes that his sacrifice might just have been enough to save Owen from dying before the armistice is signed, allows MacDonal the most moving point in the play. For this first production at another newly-opened theatre, in Glasgow's restored eighteenth-century Tron Kirk, James Telfer takes over the role of Owen from David Learner. We are now given a less raw-nerved portrayal and probably a more convincing one, as Owen submits to and eventually escapes Sassoon's influence to become his own man. One also senses more strongly the delight that the two men were able to offer each other at a time of great emotional stress. These two very fine performances are soon to be repeated in London and then to be recorded for radio and filmed for television next year.

## Author, Author

## Competition No 97

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than December 10. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that, the most nearly correct - in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries, marked "Author, Author 97" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on December 17.

1 He had been a very indifferent musical amateur in his better days; and when he fell with his brother, resorted for support to playing a clarinet as dirty as himself in a small Theatre Orchestra.

2 "That slimy tune" I said, and got a laugh. In the middle of old Franck's D minor thing; Or the cool clarinet *con brio* in his incomparable Trio.

3 "I am no judge of these things... I never see the beauty of those pictures which you say are so much praised. They are a language I do not understand. I suppose there is some relation between pictures and nature which I am too ignorant to feel - just as you see what a Greek sentence stands for which means nothing to me."

George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, chapter 13.

Competition No 93  
Winner: Sally Hawksworth  
Answers:

1 "Here I am you see, staring at a picture. I can never get by this shop

MARK AMORY is the editor of *The Letters of Evelyn Waugh*, 1980.

ZYGMUNT BAUMAN's book, *Memories of Class: the pre-history and after-life of class*, has just been published.

JULIA BRIGGS's book *This Stage-play World: English literature and its background 1580-1625* will be published next year.

P. A. BRUNT is Camden Professor of Ancient History at the University of Oxford.

JOHN CRITCHTON SMITH's novel *A Field Full of Folk* was published earlier this year.

ROBIN CORMACK is British Academy Reader at the Courtauld Institute of Art.

NORMAN DRL MAR's books include *Orchestral Variations*, 1981.

E. L. EPSTEIN's book *Language and Style* was published in 1978.

KYRIE FITZLYON's most recent book is *Before the Revolution*, 1978.

CELINA FOX is Curator of Paintings and Drawings at the Museum of London.

JOHN GUY is the author of *The Public Career of Sir Thomas More*, 1980.

SERGI HACHKIL is Reader in Russian Studies at the University of Sussex.

JANE LEWIS is the author of *The Politics of Motherhood: Child and Maternal Welfare in England, 1900-1939*, 1981.

EDWARD LUTTWAK's collected essays, *Strategy and Politics*, were published in 1980.

ADAM MARK-JONES's *Lantern Lectures* was published last year.

PATRICK MCCARTHY is the author of *Celine*, 1975, and *Camus*, 1980.

TIMOTHY McFARLAND is a Lecturer in German at University College, London.

RUSSELL MORGAN's books include *Roman Ostia* (second edition, 1974), and *The Athenian Empire*, 1972.

WOLF MENDEL is Reader in War Studies at King's College, London.

ROBALIND MITCHELL's books include *A History of Scotland*, 1970.

EDWIN MORGAN's collections of poems include *Star Game*, 1979.

without stopping. But what a life here is, by way of a boat. Did you ever see the like? What a fellow your fine painters must be - lives in such a shapeless of cockles as that. And yet, here are gentlemen stuck up in it minding their ease, and looking about them the rocks and mountains, as if the were not to be upset the next moment which they certainly must be. I would where that boat was built!

Jane Austen, *Persuasion*, chapter 11.

2 "These are not a white like nature. Nature's daylight never had that colour; never was made so white, either by storm or cloud, as this landscape there, under a sky of indigo and the indigo is not either; and those dead weeds plastered upon it are not true."

Charlotte Brontë, *Villette*, chapter 13.

3 "I am no judge of these things... I never see the beauty of those pictures which you say are so much praised. They are a language I do not understand. I suppose there is some relation between pictures and nature which I am too ignorant to feel - just as you see what a Greek sentence stands for which means nothing to me."

George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, chapter 13.

## Among this week's contributors

ROLAND OLIVER is Professor of the History of Africa at the University of London.

IDRIS PARRY's most recent book is *Hand to Mouth*, 1981.

DAVID PRYCE-JONES's biography of Cyril Connolly will be published next year.

P. J. RHODES is Senior Lecturer in Classics and Ancient History at the University of Durham.

STEVEN ROSE is Professor of Biology at the Open University.

MICHAEL ROSEN's book *Hegel's Dialectic and Its Criticism* has recently been published.

GEOFFREY SAMPOSON's *Making Sense* was published in 1980.

GEORGE STEINER's books include *The Death of Tragedy*, 1960, and *On Solitude*, 1978.

JOHN STOKES is a lecturer in English at the University of Warwick.

JEREMY WALDRON is a Fellow of the Colin College, Oxford.

CHRIS WALLACE-CRABBE's collection of poems include *The English are not Skilled Workers*, 1980.

S. J. WOOLF's most recent book is *Fascism in Europe*, 1981.

The winners of the *Times Educational Supplement's* 1982 Information Book Awards are *The Easy Way to Read* by John Kilgus, *Recognition* by John Kilgus, *Kingfisher Books*, £3.50 and *A Day with A Miner* by Philip Jones, *Wayland Publishers*, £3.25. Of the Kilgus volume the judges reported that "The process of detection is intriguing and enjoyable, fostering observation and enquiry."

The *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, which was originally published in 1969, is now being issued in instalments between 1981 and 1984. The first instalment, containing the letters A through G, was issued as a single bound volume (2150pp. Oxford University Press, 0 19 864224 5). The publishers point out that the work, the preparation of which began in 1953, is the first Latin dictionary to draw its material from original sources rather than from translations of adapted from older works. The million quotations were based on the volume of Latin from the beginning of classical Latin to the end of the second century AD.

## T. J. Wise

Sir, - Arthur Freeman's article (September 17) deals with T. J. Wise's mutilation of various printed books. It would seem that Wise also resorted to a different type of vandalism, involving autograph letters of George Borrow.

The Berg Collection in New York Public Library possesses a copy of the Berg pamphlet *Letters to his Mother*... by Borrow, 1913, summarily bound in red morocco. The original of all the fifteen letters printed in the pamphlet had obviously been bound up in this copy, but seven of them are now missing. The leaves in which they were bound have been crudely wrenched out. The purloined letters are all in the Ashley Collection in the British Library (Ashley MS B13).

That Wise was the vandal is supposition on my part, but the supposition seems well founded. The volume in the Berg bears all the hallmarks of having been bound up to the specification of C. K. Shorter, Wise's assistant. The Berg Curator confirms that the volume must have been received by the Berg in its present state. Shorter would hardly have mutilated his own beautifully bound volume, leaving jagged stubs where the letters had been torn out. But when Shorter died in 1926, his erstwhile friend and collaborator no doubt had access to his collection. A series of tugs, and seven of the letters could be incorporated in the Ashley Collection, leaving the mutilated volume to be disposed of along with the rest of the Shorter estate.

It is difficult to see how else the facts can be explained.

ANGUS FRASER,  
84 Ennerdale Road, Kew, Richmond, Surrey.

"The Spanish Tragedy"

Sir, - Having just read Emrys Jones's very enlightening and excellent analysis of *The Spanish Tragedy* (Commentary, October 15) I am moved to make one point only.

The extraordinary thing about the "play within a play" is that there appears to be no foreign-language version extant. Indeed, our research revealed no trace of the original "play within a play", and I came to the conclusion that since the seventeenth century the final scene has been performed in English, as indicated in the text. Accordingly I engaged Eric Pratt to translate the episode into Latin and Greek, and I myself managed the French (not in Latin but rather naive lumbic punster) and Jenny Patrick, our vice coach, was responsible for the

As I have explained on numerous occasions, my singing voice has always been produced in much the same fashion as that of the high lyric tenor. I was trained as a tenor, both in school and, in fact, knew nothing of the counter-tenor voice until my student days were over. It was only with my growing interest in early music, which suited my musical as well as my vocal temperament, that I found myself in the realm of the counter-tenor. When my voice first changed, at age 15, I did not immediately find it easy to sing in the higher reaches of my voice, but as time went on I found it easier, and increasingly so as my new voice developed and matured. I then began to seek out repertoire that used the highest part of my range. The development of my voice certainly belies the mistaken supposition that the true counter-tenor voice is either a case of arrested development or an imitation of what a boy does naturally. In point of fact no boy before his voice has changed can properly sing any part of the tenor repertoire, including that of the counter-tenor.

As for Frances Killingley's letter (June 18), she seems, like the most part, to be dealing with lexicographical distinctions rather than those of musicians, but what I most particularly want to take issue with is her statement about me: "It is quite possible that he uses 'stopped cords' without knowing it; singers do not as a rule know what their vocal muscles are doing."

For my own part, I must humbly insist that there has never been a time in the last thirty-five years, first as a singer and now as a teacher, that I have not known all too well what my vocal muscles have been up to. Moreover with the advent of the recent designs of voice-measuring equipment there is very little room for conjecture on this point. One can determine with great accuracy how a human voice functions.

In my own case, as Dr Milo Keynes has pointed out (May 28), I do not sing - nor have I ever sung - using the falsetto voice in any part of my vocal

range. I would have thought this ought to be clear to any musician or music lover who has heard me in person or listened to any of my vocal recordings. It is possible for me, as it is for almost everyone, to sing high notes in falsetto, a fact which has enabled me to show the distinction between falsetto production and the properly supported counter-tenor production I use in performance.

There has been so much misrepresentation and loose talk about the high male voice that not only the natural counter-tenor but the falsetto as well has been maligned. The natural high voice is a gift from nature for which the singer must be grateful, and it is only for properly nurturing, developing and training this rare gift and using it with art in the interest of that musical expression which is unique to the human voice that he is to be honoured. The falsetto, on the other hand, ought to be credited with developing skill in the use of what is, in reality, an unnatural instrument, which gives pleasure to those who prefer it to the natural human voice.

Interestingly, although there are numerous pedagogical traditions for the training of all natural voice categories, there is none for training a singer to be a falsettoist. Falsetto is mentioned in early vocal training treatises only as an artificial exercise that may in some cases help the natural voiced adult male develop flexibility in certain muscles that are also used in natural productions. Caruso, for example, no falsettoist he is said to have practised these early in his career but later to have abandoned them.

Peter Giles (July 2) complains that natural counter-tenors are rare, and he suggests that they always have been. But this may not necessarily be so. We know that there have been many astonishing changes in the human animal since the seventeenth century.

There are many interesting lines of speculation which might yield fruitful insights, historical, physiological and sociological about why so few natural counter-tenors now are singing this repertoire and why so many performers resort to falsetto in performance.

To assume though that we have no natural high male singers today is wrong. It has long been my belief that if young male singers were allowed to sing naturally - without any forcing - where their newly changed voices lie most comfortably, without pushing them too soon into a vocal category, many more, as in my case, might eventually settle higher than they appear to do at present.

RUSSELL OBERLIN,  
Department of Music, Hunter College of the City University of New York, 695 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10021.

Goethe

Sir, - It is gratifying to observe that not only are distinguished professors of German still able to write stimulating and readable books on Goethe, but that distinguished professors of German are still able to write stimulating and readable reviews of them. Even so, one may ask whether S. S. Prawer, in some of the asides in his review (November 5) of Albrecht Schöne's *Goethezeit, Liebeszauber, Satanszauber*, is not himself an unwitting victim of the kind of fashionable "excess" against which Schöne occasionally polemizes.

I allude to the references to Heine, which seem only to have the function of demonstrating the reviewer's "soundness" as if too exclusive a concern for Goethe might be felt to call this in question!

Incidentally, in a gesture which would appeal to Prawer, and which is almost worthy of Heine himself, the poet's "unloved alas, mater, Obdienten, has exacted a sublime vengeance on his ungrateful son: the plague marking the house in which Heine lived is attached to a branch of the well-known chain of fish-shops, Nordsee.

JOHN OSBORNE,  
Department of German Studies, University of Warwick, Coventry.

Donizetti

Sir, - I am moved to write to you to comment upon a few aspects of Michael Tanner's review (September 20) of my book, *Donizetti and his contemporaries*. Rather than those of musicians, but what I most particularly want to take issue with is her statement about me: "It is quite possible that he uses 'stopped cords' without knowing it; singers do not as a rule know what their vocal muscles are doing."

For my own part, I must humbly insist that there has never been a time in the last thirty-five years, first as a singer and now as a teacher, that I have not known all too well what my vocal muscles have been up to. Moreover with the advent of the recent designs of voice-measuring equipment there is very little room for conjecture on this point. One can determine with great accuracy how a human voice functions.

In my own case, as Dr Milo Keynes has pointed out (May 28), I do not sing - nor have I ever sung - using the falsetto voice in any part of my vocal

## to the editor

## Shelley

Sir, - "Shelley's ideas are fine," says Iain McGilchrist in his review of Miriam Allott's *Essays on Shelley* (November 5), "but they are not interesting." He supposes that "the real question" about Shelley is "why should he be read at all?" and he suggests that the real task is "to sift out from the rhetoric the relatively few genuine lines of poetry on which his reputation securely rests."

This has of course been the establishment line on Shelley for more than a century and a half. Nevertheless, Shelley has been read by generations after generations, despite disapproval from politicians and policemen and writers and teachers, not just for a few over-anthologized lines but for whole structures of thought and feeling, and most of his readers find his ideas and his style much finer and more interesting and indeed inspiring than those of his superior critics.

I suppose that sneering at Shelley is as good or bad a way to make a living as any other in the world of academic criticism and journalism, but I suggest that after another century and a half he will still be read and remembered and that the present sneerers will be as forgotten as the past ones are.

NICOLAS WALTER,  
88 Islington High Street, London N1.

Edmund Ironside

Sir, - In his otherwise impressive article on the hand of Shakespeare in *Edmund Ironside* (August 15), Eric Sams perpetuates two injustices to William himself and to his father John.

With regard to the former, he finds in Shakespeare's attribution of the form "All hail!" to Judas "not merely a mistake but a serious solecism". In the Gospels, he asserts, these words only occur in the mouth of the risen Christ, in Matthew 28:9 (as a translation of the plural form *hailō*). What Judas says to Christ in Matthew 26:49, according to most Tudor translations, is simply "Hail!"

Corresponding to the singular form *hailō*. This point Sams evidently derives from Richmond Noble, who gives this as an instance of misquotation in his standard work on Shakespeare's Biblical Knowledge.

On this point, however, both Noble and Sams are deceived. The use of "All hail!" by Shakespeare in this passage (from *Richard II*) is neither a misquotation from the Bible, nor is it a solecism against English grammar. In referring to the story of the Passion, Shakespeare was under no obligation to quote from any Tudor translation of the Bible at all: he had other sources at hand. What was there to prevent him from giving his own rendering of the Latin Vulgate, if he chose? In any case, we have only to consult extant versions of the Bible to find that the singular form *hailō* was not broken by her tribulations. The compendium which she edits in the West clearly irritates the Soviet authorities. The newspaper *Vechernii Leningrad* reported on February 12, 1982, that A. B. Roginskii had been sentenced to four years' loss of freedom for making Soviet archival materials available to *Pamyat'*. Jerry Hough, the American authority who believes political participation is growing in the Soviet Union, wrote optimistically in 1976 that "Soviet historians writing about the postrevolutionary period... have generally been able to publish richer, more solid, and more objective work than had been the case earlier" (*Problems of Communism*, vol 25, no 2). He should try telling that to the editors of *Pamyat'*. Their view, as they make clear in the title of the compendium and in the editorial preface to Volume 1, is that the Soviet Union has lost parts of its memory. They are doing a great deal to correct the infirmity.

DAVID SAUNDERS,  
Department of History, The University of Newcastle upon Tyne, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Shakespeare's financial situation than is available to modern scholarship. We do know that John was in financial difficulties in his later years, and he had to mortgage much of his property. But does this alone constitute fecklessness? May there not have been other reasons besides fecklessness leading him into this plight? There is, for instance, some positive evidence - regarded as highly probable by Oscar Campbell in *The Reader's Encyclopedia of Shakespeare*, though less so by Samuel Schoenbaum - that John Shakespeare was suffering under the financial burdens of Catholic recusancy. If this was so, and it is at least possible, he can hardly be called feckless for following his conscience. Even if it was not so, not everyone who falls into financial difficulties is to be criticized as feckless. It is rather the critic who is to be criticized for his presumption in going beyond the evidence.

PETER MILWARD,  
Renaissance Institute, Sophia University, 7-1 Kioi-cho Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo.

Opposition in Russia

Sir, - I should like to thank Alec Nove for his extremely full account of the contents of *Pamyat' (Memory)*: A historical compendium (September 3). In an article of 1975 about *samizdat* historiography Robert M. Slusser commented on "the extraordinary efforts the Soviet regime is making to keep the historians on a tight leash and to stamp out the samizdat movement as a form of historical research and record" (*Dissent in the USSR: Politics, Ideology, and People*, ed. Rudolf L. Tokes). He wondered whether others would follow Medvedev and Solzhenitsyn in responding to the challenge. *Pamyat'* started appearing in 1976. While it exists, the Soviet régime's efforts to control Soviet historiography cannot be completely successful. Volume 5 of the compendium, not covered in Professor Nove's review, appeared in *samizdat* in 1981 and in Paris this year.

Among other things it contains Richard Pipes's reply to Shansky's analysis of his work, an analysis described by Professor Nove as "not [to] be missed by anyone concerned with Russian history".

Perhaps Professor Nove might have said a little more about Natalya Gorbunovskaya, the editor of the compendium in the West. She described her involvement in the Red Square demonstration of August 1968. In her own *Red Square at Noon*, 1972, Sidney Bloch and Peter Redaway detailed her tribulations between 1968 and 1976 in Chapter 5 of their book *Russia's Political Hospitals*, 1977. Gorbunovskaya emigrated in 1976. The publication of the first volume of *Pamyat'* in New York in 1978, two years after its appearance in *samizdat* in Moscow, showed that she had not been broken by her troubles. The compendium which she edits in the West clearly irritates the Soviet authorities. The newspaper *Vechernii Leningrad* reported on February 12, 1982, that A. B. Roginskii had been sentenced to four years' loss of freedom for making Soviet archival materials available to *Pamyat'*. Jerry Hough, the American authority who believes political participation is growing in the Soviet Union, wrote optimistically in 1976 that "Soviet historians writing about the postrevolutionary period... have generally been able to publish richer, more solid, and more objective work than had been the case earlier" (*Problems of Communism*, vol 25, no 2). He should try telling that to the editors of *Pamyat'*. Their view, as they make clear in the title of the compendium and in the editorial preface to Volume 1, is that the Soviet Union has lost parts of its memory. They are doing a great deal to correct the infirmity.

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## Information, please

Sir Robert Birley: personal reminiscences etc sought; for a biography, Arthur Henderson, Courtyard House, Oakley Park, Trilford Heath, Oxford OX13 6QW.

Brotherly relations: anecdotes, personal experiences, biographical or literary reference and any other material on this theme; for a projected theatrical production.

David Swift,  
c/o 1/6 Falconberg Court, London W1.

Jane Nugent Burke (c.1734-1812), wife of Edmund Burke; whereabouts of correspondence, information on descendants.

Elizabeth R. Lambert  
Department of English, University Maryland, College Park, Maryland 20742.

Henry-D. Davray, translator and critic: whereabouts of papers of, or relating to, H-D. Davray (other than those in Cambridge University Library or Brotherton Library, Leeds); also holdings of his short-lived magazine, *Cross-Channel*.

M. J. Tibby,  
Seiwen College, Cambridge CB3 9PQ.

The Faerie Queene: whereabouts of illustrations; especially in private collections; depicting characters and episodes in whatever medium: paintings, drawings, engravings, etchings, ceramics, textiles, stained glass for a study of Spenser illustration.

N. Farmer,  
Department of English, University of Texas, Austin, Texas 78712.

Vivien Leigh and Laurence Olivier: 1948 Old Vic tour of Australia and New Zealand; personal reminiscences etc sought of lived and tour.

Garry O'Connor,  
24 Chalfont Road, Oxford.

Sir Augustus Wollaston Franks (1826-97), Keeper of British and Medieval Antiquities at the British Museum, President of the Society of Antiquaries: correspondence and personal background information sought for a biographical paper.

David M. Wilson,  
British Museum, London WC1.

Centimeni v Players' marches (1806-1962): recollections or stories relating to on and off the field relationships between captain, other amateurs and professional cricketers of this period.

Michael Marshall,  
c/o Richard Johnson, Granada Publishing, 36 Golden Square, London W1R 4AH.

Louise Hanson-Dyer of 'Oiseau-Lyre', publisher of music and recording: any information or correspondence; for a biography.

John Davidson,  
Australian Studies Centre, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 27-28 Russell Square, London WC1B 3DS.

C. J. Cuddehegne Hyne (1865-1944), novelist and traveller: whereabouts of his papers and photographs; for a study.

G. Peter Wittington,  
English Department, Faculty of Letters, BSEB, University of Lausanne, 1015 Lausanne, Switzerland.



## A progressive in the fly-room

Steven Rose

ELOF AXEL CARLSON

Genes, Radiation, and Society: The Life and Work of H. J. Muller. 457pp. Cornell University Press. £21. 0 8014 1304 4

There is a poignant moment in Elof Axel Carlson's biography of his mentor, the geneticist H. J. Muller, a meeting in 1959 between himself, Muller, by then sixty-nine and many years a Nobel Laureate for his discovery of the mutagenic effect of X-rays, and the exuberant Francis Crick, not yet Nobelized for proving the double-helical structure of DNA. For nearly fifty years, the leitmotiv of Muller's work had been the material basis of the gene. Now, a new generation of molecular biologists had located it in the complementary nucleotide structure of DNA. Yet far from being hailed as a prophetic forerunner, Muller and his students, in their formal clothes and crew-cuts, were virtually ignored by the fashionably dressed, long-haired and loud-talking Crick and his fellow conquerors of nature.

For Muller, time was out of joint almost throughout his life. His researching days had begun in the famous "flyroom" — the laboratory of T. H. Morgan, who had recognized that fruit flies, with their small size, rapid breeding cycle and range of observable variations (eye colour, wing shape and so on) could provide a wealth of genetic information far beyond what could be hoped for from the study of the slow-growing plants which had dominated genetics since the rediscovery of Mendel's work in the early 1900s. But although Morgan and his students were able to identify the "factors" which carried genetic information as localized on the chromosomes in the cells, they were very suspicious of attempts to argue that these factors had a material reality in actual chemical structures.

By contrast, Muller, who began

working with the group as a student in 1911, was already convinced that the "hereditary units" (the term gene was still not used) were chemical substances, made by biochemical processes within the cell — and he said as much in a remarkable student lecture to a biology club he had helped to found in 1909. Hence the focus of his research with the flies. If one could study the process of mutation — the appearance of new forms in the progeny of the flies — one could perhaps infer the nature of the substance, the gene, at which the mutation acted. If mutations were chemical, noxious chemicals or temperature change should increase the mutation rate.

But for ten years nothing Muller tried seemed to affect the rate. It wasn't until the later 1930s that effective chemical mutagens were discovered, by Charlotte Auerbach, working with Muller in Edinburgh. But long before then, in 1923, Muller had begun to develop the techniques which would give him the mutations he sought — X-rays. Radiation speeded up the mutation rate manifold, and in its use Muller believed he had the route to his philosophical goal: the artificial transmutation of organisms — the speeding-up of the evolutionary process. Just as physicists could use radiation to split the atom and transmute elements, so Muller believed he could do the same for organisms. To Morgan's disapproval he argued that before long geneticists would have to become chemists, extracting genes from organisms and manipulating them in the test-tube.

But Muller was not merely concerned with the abstract analysis of the genetic process; he urgently wanted to intervene in it. Again, the main theme of his life's belief was set in his undergraduate address to his biology club. Controlled human breeding, sterilization of the unfit, encouragement of the fit to breed more, would improve the human race. Sociologists would define the best human qualities; geneticists would breed for them. This enthusiasm led

Muller, along with many other geneticists, into the eugenics movement of the 1920s, with its belief that poverty and debauchery ran in the genes, and that white Anglo-Saxons were genetically superior to all other human "races". The political successes of the eugenics movement in the US in the 1920s — the passage in many states of sterilization Acts, and its invocation in the racialist immigration laws — conflicted with Muller's socialism: he rejected eugenics in the hands of the right, only to assert it in the hands of the left.

For Muller — improbably in the context of the generally highly conservative milieu of American science — was a socialist by conviction and political practice. Admittedly, his socialism was of a kind that today's radical left would criticize as elitist and chauvinist, committed to the view that science was inevitably socially progressive. The most famous scientist on campus at Austin, Texas, following his X-ray work, Muller helped students publish a radical magazine, was denounced as a communist and subversive, and in 1932 left the US for a virtually a decade of wandering across Europe, in search of a congenial political and scientific base. Attracted by Soviet socialism's enthusiasm for science and the fame of its geneticists, such as Nicolai Vavilov, although with what appears to have been at best only a partial grasp of the Marxist concept of dialectical materialism (he read Engels, but philosophically remained a true child of the nineteenth-century mechanistic materialists such as Feuerbach and Moleschott, against whom Engels had polemicized), he found himself heading a genetics laboratory in Moscow. He arrived as a hero — only to be caught up in the turmoil which was to lead to the rise of the fraudulent Lysenko, the purging and ultimate death of Vavilov and the eclipse of Soviet genetics. Simultaneously, the rise of Nazism gave new and sinister meaning to the racial purification programme of eugenics.

Muller arranged a graceful exit from

the Soviet Union by way of the International Brigade in Spain and found refuge among the progressive geneticists of Edinburgh, where a political tradition of English socialism and anti-Nazism was also antithetical to the straitjacket which Stalin was beginning to fit over Soviet science. Finally, Muller returned to the US; by 1946 he was a Nobel laureate, though still without a permanent position in the scientific establishment, until he found a haven in Indiana which would last virtually to his death in 1967. Throughout the vicissitudes of his European pilgrimage, he kept his fly stocks going, returning to work with them when he could with the tenacity of a now dying breed of nineteenth-century scientist. But increasingly the new genetics he had heralded was to pass him by: the day of the fly was giving way to the day of the dog, the hand-lens to the ultracentrifuge, as genetics became inevitably biochemical.

More and more Muller was concerned with public affairs; he reasserted his faith in eugenics ("in the right hands") and it is no surprise that the "genetic repository" in California set up to receive the frozen sperm of American Nobel prizewinners in the late 1970s should have been (until his widow protested) named after Herman Muller. The problems such naive preformationist reductionism was to lead him into (quite apart from the sexist image such sperm-banks reveal of the woman as merely an empty receptacle destined to breed male qualities) are indicated by the differences between the pre-war and post-war editions of his visionary book *Out of the Night*. In the 1930s, his list of famous men to be used as breeding stock included V. I. Lenin; in the post-war edition, Lenin's name was quietly dropped. But Muller clearly still believed, at one level, that the chances of Bolshevik revolution in the US were likely to be significantly enhanced by the seeding of recipients with Lenin-sperm. It is just that he liked the prospect less.

In addition, his work with X-rays

had proved that most mutations were deleterious rather than beneficial. All radiation increased the mutation rate, the human "genetic load" increased. He became a trenchant critic not merely of the excessive use of X-rays, but of the far more serious prospect of radiation damage from nuclear weapons, running foul of the US Atomic Energy Commission's result.

Muller seems to have been a somewhat suspicious man, with a capacity for unhappiness and a recurrent sense of the injustices of a world which denied him the recognition and priority to his scientific achievements deserved. He clearly also inspired love in his students, and Dr Carlson's biography, fifteen years in the making — speaks of that affection. Genetics has on the whole been well served by a historians, perhaps because its history has been so inextricably tied up in the ideological and social turmoil of the twentieth century, but it makes a fascinating story whose scientific content is sharply and clearly made as a series of stages each set by the introduction of new organisms to study or of new technologies by which to study them. Carlson himself, a geneticist and a historian of his subject, he understands Muller's scientific contribution intimately, but he cannot help feeling that some of the genteel old-fashionedness which betters on meeting Crick in 1959 has remained with him. He respects Muller's concerns with X-ray damage; he cannot find it in him to embrace or even understand the enthusiasm of Muller — like so many others — for Soviet communism in the 1930s, or yet to draw out strongly enough the implications, social and intellectual, of the eugenic obsessions which both pre- and post-dated Muller's socialism.

But the enigmatic figure of Muller demanded a full-length biography; the history of genetics was to be adequately served, and despite the limitations Dr Carlson has done his job splendidly.



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## From biology to politics

Jane Lewis

NANCY STEPAN

The Idea of Race in Science: Great Britain 1800-1960. 230pp. Macmillan. In association with St Antony's College, Oxford. £20. 0 333 28856 4

In 1899 an American sociologist estimated that over one and a half million adults and ten million children had been measured in Europe and the United States in order to establish their racial identity. The notion of millions of skulls being measured by callipers and cephalometers in the name of scientific investigation may well be dismissed as absurd, but the tendency to dismiss it may also be responsible for the neglect by historians of British racial science. Nancy Stepan has done us a great service by treating the subject comprehensively and seriously.

Few of the biologists and physical anthropologists whose work was crucial to the development of a racial science broke the accepted canons of scientific procedure of their day. As Stepan argues, racial science may have been bad science, but it cannot be dismissed as pseudo-science, not even at its apparently lunatic fringe. That lots of people in early nineteenth-century England rushed off to have their "heads read" should not obscure the fact that phrenology influenced the views of a generation of scientists in Britain, including many leading evolutionists. Similarly, the eugenics movement of the early twentieth century, which has often received short shrift from historians, was supported by some of the finest scientists of the day.

It is interesting that many aspects of racial science, particularly its vocabulary, should have become so

popular. Politicians and the press talked about the fear of "racial degeneration" during the 1900s and continued to refer to the dangers of breeding a "C3 population" well into the interwar period. These terms were never properly defined. Indeed Stepan shows that the term "race" itself was given a wide variety of meanings. It was used to refer to cultural, religious, national, linguistic, ethnic and geographic groups of human beings, so that at one time or another the "Jews", "Celts", "Irish", "Negro", "Anglo-Saxon", "Europeans", "Mediterranean" and "Aryans" were all "races" according to scientists. The major problem faced by the physical anthropologists was how to divide up individuals and populations into distinct racial categories which were acceptable to everyone. It proved impossible to accomplish this on the basis of skull measurement, which was why blood groups were seized on so eagerly by some anthropologists in the hope that they would provide a better classificatory system. But essentially each scientist found a variety of races as he wanted.

While it is easy to understand scientific fascination with human variation, it is hard to see why, in view of the obvious methodological difficulties, scientists made race central to their analysis of human diversity. Between 1800 and 1950, to use Stepan's phrase, "race" was everything. For the physical anthropologists, racial classification implicitly provided an explanation of human society and history, and for the biologists, the evolution of culture could be explained in biological rather than historical terms. In other words, racial science provided "naturalistic" explanations for extremely puzzling and complex human problems. An important part of the appeal of evolution and the much earlier notion of a great chain of being was the way in which both incorporated the idea of a natural hierarchy. Early in the debate

the crucial issue became how wide the gulf between man and the animals actually was; those who considered it to be small, like Darwin himself, tended "naturally" to insert the "lower", "savage" races, and in particular the Negro, to fill it. Stepan is able to point continuously to the way in which social and moral issues were treated simply in biological terms. Eugenists, for example, investigated patterns of heredity, assuming that the appearance of a trait in generation after generation proved it to be hereditary, while ignoring the fact that the family itself is also an agent of social transmission.

Stepan argues that racial science must be understood in terms of an underlying continuity rather than of changing stages. Even though evolutionists rejected the idea of an original, created diversity of racial types associated with one strand of early nineteenth-century scientific thought, most scientists interpreted evolution in such a way as to make natural selection no longer operative on physical man, so that racial types could still be thought of as old and fixed. It was not that scientists consciously promoted racism. The vast majority did not, although many nonetheless played a part in strengthening racial science. The early nineteenth-century biologist, James Cowles Prichard, is a case in point, for despite his opposition to slavery, Prichard instinctively shared the contemporary belief in European superiority. During the early nineteenth century, as Stepan argues, "race" increasingly became a primary form of self and group identification. Convinced that racial difference was qualitative, Western European scientists measured groups of men negatively against an ideal image of themselves.

This must help to explain the great emotional commitment with which

scientists held on to biological explanations of human problems. Since the revelation that the late Sir Cyril Burt falsified some of his data, there has perhaps been a greater readiness to accept the strength of the influence exerted by ideological assumptions. For, as Stepan notes, the point is that scientists are always susceptible to ideas and traditions in their own societies which may consciously or unconsciously shape the way in which they define problems and the theories they put forward to explain them. Thus while Karl Pearson's statistical approach to eugenics meant that he insisted that the anthropologist should deal not with the racial type nor with the individual but with the statistically representative sample of race, he nevertheless had no doubt that there was correlation between physical and mental traits. It was just that the anthropologists were

George Everard Rumphius (1628-1702) was a well-educated German naturalist from Hanau. After three obscure years of service as a mercenary soldier in Europe, he went out to the East in 1652 as a military cadet in the service of the Dutch East India Company (VOC). Shortly after his arrival at Batavia in June 1653 he was posted to Ambon, where he transferred to the civil branch, and where he remained until his death. His outstanding merits as a naturalist were recognized by the highest authorities at Batavia (he not always by those at Ambon). He was soon released from active duty, but given an adequate salary to devote himself to his studies on the regional flora, fish, shellfish, minerals and precious stones. He became blind in 1670 and lost his wife and daughter in a disastrous earthquake four years later. But with job-like constancy, he continued his researches, helped by his son, being variously known as the

looking for it in the wrong places and the wrong way. Not until after World War Two did the work of geographers lead to a genuinely new population genetics, which ousted the old classificatory biology of race.

If there is a criticism to make of the admirably lucid synthesis of the developments in racial science over two centuries, and of the historical debates surrounding particular issues and figures, it is that it may not be possible to restrict discussion to the scientific debate and still write the social history of ideas that is Stepan's stated goal. Charles Webster recently suggested that we should look at evolutionary theory as a bridge between the biological and physical sciences. Certainly, the interplay between political and scientific discourse in this area is important enough to warrant investigation.

"Indian Pliny" and the "blind see of Ambon". Losses by fire, earthquake and shipwrecks prevented the publication of any of his scientific works during his lifetime. His posthumously published books on natural history (1705, 1711, 1741-50) and on the history of Ambon (1910), are of great value and interest to scholars as the extracts given from the *History of the Indies* (260pp. Post University of Massachusetts Press, \$20. 0 87023 329 7). E. M. Rumphius, who edited and translated the work, is primarily a poet and a novelist, but he has made himself familiar with the relevant historical and scientific literature, as his erudite — and entertaining — annotations reveal. Rumphius's scientific work of Ambon is firmly placed in the context of the work and in the history of science. C. R. Box



## The flow of favours

P. A. Brunt

RICHARD P. SALLER

Personal Patronage under the Early Empire  
222pp. Cambridge University Press.  
£18.50.  
0 521 23300 3

Patronage and clientship are taken in this lucid, elegant, scholarly and well-reasoned study to be an asymmetrical relationship between unequals for the exchange of goods and services extending over some length of time. In Roman terms it involves the performance of *officia*, which may describe strict moral obligations, or *beneficia*, which may mean mere favours. Roman moralists indeed thought it proper to bestow *beneficia* without thought of recompense, and only on those who deserved them, but the deserving would be those who would repay materially when they could, and in any event with lasting gratitude. Friends too have reciprocal obligations, and the distinction between friendship and patronage is hard to draw, since patrons would courteously style as friends those who were so far below them in social status as to be really their dependants. Richard P. Saller tends to classify as patronage the support given by senior friends to their juniors of the same or much the same status who were destined to be their successors in eminence. This is patronage in a very attenuated sense, which inevitably exists in all societies, as today in politics and many professions, and did not necessarily involve dependence.

In the Roman Republic the nobility, it is commonly supposed, owed their political dominance largely to the mass of clients whom they could marshal as voters in the assemblies or even as fighters in street brawls or civil wars. Under the Principate power was concentrated in the autocrat, and flowed downwards from those he chose to honour. A subject who tried to establish his own power on a personal following could incur the fatal

suspicion of an all-powerful emperor. This gives some colour to the conception that the importance of patronage declined in the Principate. Saller refutes this: he might have gone further. The prevailing interpretation of Republican politics rests more on endless repetition than on ancient evidence. As voters, gangsters and soldiers humble Italians had often set at naught the wishes and interests of the nobility in response to the slogan of freedom (personal security and independence) and to the hope of material gains, cheap food distributed at public expense, grants of land by the state, remissions of debt. In the Principate they had lost their political rights and could not resort to insurrection. Benefits, in so far as they were not assured by imperial administration of the law, could be obtained only by access to the emperor and those who had his ear or possessed authority by his favour. Patronage then becomes more indispensable, and evidence for it actually multiplies, notably but not only in the city of Rome itself. It remains true that the patrons did not gain in power through their dependants. What did they get out of it? Sometimes gifts, but chiefly honour, dignity, prestige, to which the highest value was attached in antiquity. In the Republic too that had probably been true; we hear most of client communities and individuals, in the provinces who are also abundantly documented in the Principate, but they could never contribute much to political and military power. "A man's social status was reflected in the size of this following."

Saller is rather too ready to accept modern conceptions of the patronal role of the emperor himself. Naturally he had his own personal or family clients, having often been once a private magnate. But the suggestion that he was the universal patron has no support in the evidence. Moreover, a patron was one from whom special favours were expected; the patron of all would be the patron of none. Of course the emperor bestowed innumerable *beneficia*, ranging from offices and status to huge gifts of money. But by advancing some, he

inevitably disappointed others; and liberality (at the taxpayers' expense), if carried too far, entailed unpopular exactions. Saller quotes a saying of Seneca that, protected by his *beneficium*, an emperor was secure in the love of his subjects. But *beneficium* does not always imply reciprocity between friends or patrons and clients: Romans spoke of the *beneficium* of a law, which secured rights to all qualified persons. It was a general beneficence that would enable the emperor to rule securely with general consent. Saller says that he was "expected" to bestow offices etc on his friends. But it was the mark of a good emperor to have friends chosen for nobility, talent and integrity; his position was weakened if he had unwisely "favoured" deserters. Desert was theoretically the criterion for benefits bestowed on others. Thus citizenship was granted to those who had really or supposedly rendered services to Rome, and immunities on men who had reached admitted distinction in certain professions. In actual fact of course favours often flowed from imperial caprice, or were procured for their friends and clients by men of influence.

The great merit of Saller's book lies in his account of the working of influence, not least in official appointments. Unlike the Chinese, the Romans evolved no "imperial mechanism" for filling posts in the civil administration or army. Saller shows that the claims of seniority in promotion are commonly overstated. Those of merit are harder to assess. The emperor rarely knew candidates at first hand and had to rely on the recommendations of others. This was also true of high officials making appointments themselves. "Referees" praised their protégés only in very general terms for "integrity" (a virtue more often lauded than practised in a venal society), culture and industry. Given that what was desired in an official was (as Saller rightly maintains) "general experience" and "good character" rather than "technical competence", which is seldom illustrated in long public careers, this is not surprising. In similar circumstances

modern referees often write in similar terms, and now, as then, the weight of their testimonials varies with the respect they themselves enjoy with whoever makes the appointment. What is alien to moderns is the candour with which Romans stress that if their candidate is selected they or other notables will be placed under an obligation to be repaid if possible, though in addressing the emperor they can only parade their own devotion and the favour he has already shown them. Stranger still, men had little or no compunction in using their influence to expedite and even deflect the course of justice in the interest of friends or clients.

The network of patronage extended, as Saller illustrates in his last chapter,

## Three tens of tyrants

P. J. Rhodes

PETER KRENTZ

The Thirty at Athens  
167pp. Cornell University Press.  
0 8014 1450 4

We are well supplied with source texts on the régime of the Thirty in Athens, in 404-403 BC: in Xenophon's *Hellenica* we have the narrative of a man who lived under that régime; there are accounts in the histories of Diodorus Siculus and Justin, both (it is agreed) derived from the fourth-century writer Ephorus; there is another fourth-century version in the Aristotelian *Athenian Politeia*; and we have further material in law-court speeches, particularly that of Lysias against Erastosthenes. These narratives disagree, not only on the matters to be included, and on the truth about some of those matters, but also on the order in which some of the main episodes took place.

Most scholars have concluded that, where disagreement exists, the eyewitness Xenophon is to be preferred. If this is right, the change from democracy to "the ancestral constitution" was not required by Sparta in the peace treaty which ended the Peloponnesian War; soon after coming to power, the Thirty obtained the support of a Spartan garrison and embarked on a reign of terror; in response to the objections of Thucydides, who had helped to bring the oligarchy into being but was unhappy with the result, they produced a list of three thousand privileged citizens and disarmed the remainder; they then eliminated Thucydides and expelled the unprivileged from the city; and after that Thrasylbulus occupied Phyle and built up a force of democratic supporters to oppose the Thirty.

Peter Krentz suggests that Ephorus' account of the Thirty was derived partly from Xenophon and partly from that anonymous continuation of Thucydides, the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia*, and that the account in the *Athenian Politeia* was derived from H.O.; H.O., where they can be compared, is superior to Xenophon; so the version of events in A.P. is derived from H.O., deserves serious consideration. Accordingly, Krentz believes that "the ancestral

constitution" was required by Sparta, the oligarchy was mild and well intentioned at first; trouble began when Thrasylbulus occupied Phyle and Theramenes was eliminated because he wanted to broaden the basis of the government in order to meet the threat; after that the unprivileged were disarmed, and the Thirty became more ruthless and finally asked for a garrison from Sparta.

In addition to the change in perspective which results from change in preferred source, Krentz further revisions to advance his strikingly, the oligarchic régime was not simply a narrow oligarchy but an attempt to remodel the Athenian state on Spartan lines: thirty was the size of the Spartan gerousia; thus thousand was about the number of Spartan "equals" in 404 (this is perhaps too generous an estimate if we judge from their number in 371), when the unprivileged Athenians were expelled from the city and, like the Spartans, forced to turn to agriculture; the difference between the two constitutions and the others would resemble that between Spanish "equals" and perolot.

No ancient text defends the Thirty and it may be that they do not deserve all the obloquy that has been heaped on them. However, Krentz's book is built on sand. That Ephorus and the *Athenian Politeia* have a source in common is by no means certain; A.P. is derived from the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia*, which is pure speculation. One cannot agree with Xenophon's order of the main events, and A.P. divergent order seems designed to place the killing of Theramenes early and to exculpate him from involvement in the misdeeds of the Thirty. Imbalance of Sparta can be seen in the "equal" who acted as political agents before the democracy was overthrown; but the Thirty are best explained (as in A.P. account) as three tens, and for A.P. less than for Xenophon (for part of the story it appears to be these tens who have a common source) the Thirty are the privileged three thousand; the part of the original oligarchic plan (the response to Theramenes' objection) in building up his picture of the Thirty as a pair of frequenters of the law-courts, and while removing the anomalies he has introduced new ones. He has gone about his work with ingenuity, but the result is not persuasive.

Jeffrey Waldron  
JEFFREY PAUL (Editor)  
Reading Nozick: Essays on Anarchy, State and Utopia  
216pp. Blackwell. £18 (paperback, £10.95).  
0 631 12977 4

Robert Nozick's *Anarchy, State and Utopia* was published in 1974. It is hard to find a phrase which accurately describes its reception; perhaps "universally hostile acclaim" comes closest. Almost none of the philosophical journals showed any sympathy for the main position that Nozick was defending, and most of the attacks on *ASU* since 1974 (there have been hundreds) have found his general line unconvincing and the detail of his arguments unconvincing. At the same time, the book was hailed on all sides as "brilliantly intelligent", "brilliant", "original" and "needle-sharp"; the very extent of the critical literature it generated pays tribute to its importance; and, whether we like it or not, it has now a secure place in the pantheon of modern political philosophy, alongside the classic it was written to answer - John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*.

The main argument of *ASU* explains the basic but not the acclamation. Nozick wants to show that individuals are capable of acquiring natural rights of ownership over resources by their own efforts or by trading with those who have already acquired such rights. These natural property rights are so extensive that they leave no room for the existence of anything like rights to medical care, education, a job, a decent standard of living, or even equality of opportunity. The resources that these putative welfare rights would require are already someone's property, so (according to Nozick) no such rights exist. He does not even have to maintain that property rights are absolute: since he recognizes that the moral universe that he is modelling is the moral universe that the government of Nozick's state would recognize, protect and uphold

## Birth of a bureaucracy

Kyril FitzLyon

DAVID ROUSSET

The Legacy of the Bolshevik Revolution: Volume 1 of a Critical History of the USSR  
Translated by Alan Freeman  
311pp. Allison and Busby. £13.95 (paperback, £5.95).  
0 85031 160 8

The dust-jacket of *The Legacy of the Bolshevik Revolution* quotes the opinions expressed by highly reputable French newspapers and periodicals when the whole work, including presumably the eventual Volume Two of the English translation, appeared in France a decade ago under the title *La société érotique*. It is a chorus of praise, with the *Quotidien Littéraire* affirming that it was "the most important book of the year", fully comparable to *Das Kapital*. The British publishers acclaim it as "the first critical history of the USSR of any breadth or scholarship to have appeared".

It is disappointing, therefore, to find that by far the greater part of the present volume consists of little more than an uncritical repetition of official mythology and a collection of clichés borrowed, with or without acknowledgement, from the writings of Trotsky, Bukharin, Rakovsky and the so-called "left opposition" generally. Rousset's basic theme, like that of his teachers, is the revolution's failure, for which he perceives two fundamental reasons: its premature-ness and its bureaucratization. It was, in his view, premature in Russia and would have been anywhere else at the time, not for political or social or even economic reasons, but because the technological level reached by industry anywhere was still too low: capitalist conditions of production had not yet

reached the peak of their efficiency and, hence, were not yet ready to be superseded by socialism. Consequently, after a short interlude of proletarian democracy and workers' control of industry, the bureaucracy started taking over, until eventually, by 1929-30, it became the ruling class. The proletariat no longer controlled the means of production, the Soviet Union ceased to be a workers' state and "the capitalist mode of production was reintroduced".

Rousset never asks himself the question whether the workers' state, in the shape of a genuine workers' control of industry, really existed in Lenin's time, the time of "war communism" much admired by Rousset for its socialist purity. Officially it did, and he accepts this as a fact. Just as he accepts that Lenin's true aim was "a broad workers' democracy", and that "all power to the soviets" was not a slogan, meant (like workers' control) to disorganize and weaken opponents, but a serious goal to be achieved and consolidated as a permanent institution, Rousset even asserts that "war communism" took on the task of agricultural collectivization, though in actual fact the relevant decree passed in February 1919 was never seriously applied. By 1927, long after "war communism" had passed into history, the collective and state farms did not even cover two per cent of the sown area.

Together with Trotsky and the "left opposition", Rousset sees the 1920s as dominated by the *kulaks* or "rich" peasants, though, wisely, he does not attempt to define exactly who they were (neither did Lenin, it should be added), how rich they had to be to fit into that category or, indeed, whether wealth had anything to do with it (very little or nothing at all, in the opinion of those who preferred a political or a social definition). Whoever they were, in Rousset's (and Trotsky's) estimation

they were an emanation of the New Economic Policy (NEP), and, being protected by the bureaucracy, they became a social force, pressing for the denationalization of the land, concentrating in their hands "most of the harvests and revenues", infiltrating "the apparatus of control" and reducing the poorer peasants to the status of "agricultural workers or unemployed labourers". It is interesting to compare this view of the Russian "rich" peasants' power and influence in the 1920s with the revealing fact that in 1925 peasant households wealthy enough to employ hired labour formed just 1.9 per cent of the total number. Nevertheless, Rousset remains convinced of the *kulaks'* power and thinks, or at least repeats with the Trotskyists of the time, that with the rich peasant dominating the agricultural scene, the urban worker "dispossessed of his theoretical and practical rights of control", and the free market restored through NEP, the socialism introduced by the revolution was at an end.

Stalin buried it. True, he put an end to NEP and all its works, stepped up industrialization, prevented any denationalization of the land by a vigorous policy of collectivization and exterminated the *kulaks* - all useful measures in Rousset's estimation, but which deprived the "left opposition" of "any political programme". Stalin, after all, "was continuing the work of the revolution". The trouble was that he was doing so "with barbarous methods": state terror and the physical liquidation of the opposition. These methods undermined all the revolutionary gains of the Stalin régime since they "provoked a socialist growth of the bureaucracy" which "supplanted the proletariat" as the ruling class.

On this view, Khrushchev's de-stalinization merely scratched the surface, since the bureaucracy was not

affected. By naming as victims of Stalin's terror only the members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and other establishment figures, Khrushchev exempted "the upper bureaucracy" from responsibility for the crimes committed. Post-Stalin governments, like all governments, found themselves, for good or ill, in the power of current scientific and technological development. If they did not abolish labour camps altogether, they at least shut down a number of them, but this was because "administrative compulsion - as a regulator of production - was rejected by the new technical infrastructure": camps became "a major obstacle" to development. However, science, which made possible the new technology and hence the growth of productive forces, required complete intellectual freedom for its development, and the scientific intelligentsia, which began by criticizing the management of the economy, ended with a demand for political democratization. The government's ("bureaucracy's") response has been

repression and a move towards the re-establishment of Stalinism. This, Rousset thinks, it is unlikely to achieve since it would involve large-scale re-introduction of concentration camps, which would go "against the social and technological demands" of a modern economy. Only an extremely critical internal situation and "a violent reversal of the world conjuncture" - an unclear condition - could force the Soviet bureaucracy to disregard these demands.

None of this adds much to the criticism and analysis of the Soviet régime as voiced by the communist left. This is not, perhaps, surprising since Rousset is himself a founding member of the Trotskyist movement, but it limits the book's interest or usefulness. However, to be fair, it may be too early to pass judgment on a work on the basis of its first volume only. Besides, its style, turgid and ponderous as it is, is aggravated by a very inadequate translation which, on occasion, derives the contents of much of its meaning. Perhaps Volume Two will be more fortunate.

## Liberty before all

Geoffrey Sampson

DAVID SPITZ

The Real World of Liberalism  
232pp. University of Chicago Press.  
£14.  
0 226 76973 9

Few political terms ever mean the same thing to all of their users. It is just too tempting to stretch the attractive words to cover one's own position, and to stretch the nasty words to include one's opponents. (Does "fascist" nowadays mean anything more than "holding political views with which the speaker strongly disagrees"? Even so, the word "liberal" has had unusually bad luck. It isn't merely that some people use it as little more than a vague expression of approval: in America it has actually come to stand for something like the opposite of its etymological sense. A few years ago the Professor of Jurisprudence at Oxford (an American) defined a liberal as someone who values equality over freedom when the two ideals conflict. "Liberal" in the US, in fact, commonly functions as a euphemism for "socialist", still an unmentionable word in much of American society. In Britain the connotation of individual freedom from state control has never been lost, but the word has become so confusing that it seems to be little used nowadays.

David Spitz believes in liberalism, sees it as losing ground in contemporary American society to less attractive political ideals, and aims to launch a "counterattack" against liberalism's enemies. But "the liberalism" Spitz is defending is the "liberalism" runs, uncompromisingly, "freedom above all other values, even over equality and justice." This seems hardly an extreme liberal ideal, if not an anarchistic social ideal. But elsewhere Spitz puts a very different gloss on his liberalism: "contemporary liberals turn to a positive version of the state and countenance wide rule-making activity... the positive state... employs an egalitarian form of power - one man, one vote - to counteract those radical disparities, especially economic differences, that interfere with genuine individual freedom of choice." The use of state power to equalize people's economic situations is a political aim which can legitimately be advocated, but to suggest that this aim flows from the decision to esteem liberty over equality can lead to nothing but confusion.

A curious feature of the Nozick debate is that the man himself has never seen fit to respond in print to critics of *ASU*. (This is in marked contrast to Rawls, who, since 1971, has made several contributions to the debate about *A Theory of Justice*.) Perhaps Nozick can be criticized for this: philosophy thrives on debate and exchange, and much of the progress that is made in the subject nowadays is made in continuing dialogue in the public forum. In any case, his silence has constrained the editor to include a paper that Nozick wrote three years before *ASU* was published. The paper reconstructs and criticizes Ayn Rand's argument for capitalism based on the necessity of egoism. It is no doubt a fascinating piece, but its interest lies mainly in the context of the domestic squabbles of the American libertarian right. Its inclusion here (and that of two or three other papers which pursue the issue) threatens to distort and undermine the general appeal of an otherwise excellent collection.

More interesting than these rather dated chapters are the parts of the book in which Spitz discusses the emergence, since the mid-1970s, of various thinkers of the New Right. They horrify him; they are carnivores, and Spitz is a herbivore. Unfortunately he is very selective in his coverage. He has a fair amount on Friedrich Hayek (an honorary member of the New Right even if he was born in the nineteenth century), and a lot on Robert Nozick, but he nowhere refers to Milton Friedman's son, David (whose advocacy of a stateless or near-stateless capitalist society is a good deal more consistent and persuasive than Nozick's), and he mentions Murray Rothbard just once, dismissing him briefly as a "so-called libertarian" - though it would be difficult to go further than Rothbard in adhering to Spitz's principle of esteeming liberty above equality and justice.

Spitz notices how the emergence of lively pro-capitalist social thought has been accompanied by a sudden eagerness on the part of American money-men to fund scholarship of this congenial variety. This is happening on quite a large scale now. It raises an obvious problem, and as far as I am aware Spitz is the first to have drawn public attention to it. Nevertheless I believe he exaggerates the danger that corporate patronage will give "conservative" thinkers an influence that they could not have attained without it. A lot of right-wing academics are currently being maintained by such funding, but in my experience most of them are pretty dull writers; managers of American corporations tend not to be skilled at judging either scholarship or literary talent. In the long run ideas succeed or fail on their merits, rather than by reference to the weight of dollars backing them.

David Spitz died shortly before the manuscript of this book was ready for publication. A few passages were written up by his widow from his notes, and the "Credo" ending the book is an unfinished state. Spitz would probably have eliminated various repetitions and inconsistencies between the reprinted earlier articles, and improved the new material.

## Building on the ruins

Russell Meiggs

GUSTAV HERMANSEN

Ostia: Aspects of Roman City Life  
261pp. University of Alberta Press.  
0 88694 066 8

Before the Second World War Ostia attracted few visitors and meagre literature. The excavations had already provided the first practical illustration of the housing revolution at Rome in the late Republic and early Empire, but little attention was paid to them outside Italy. The intensive campaign of 1938-42 transformed the place of Ostia in Roman studies. The excavated area was more than doubled, leaving only a third of the town still covered, and the large number of new inscriptions included many of prime importance. New light was thrown on the development of the town plan, which is now seen, as the author of this book explains in detail, to have expanded first to the west and not the east of the Castrum. New variations in the plans of *insulae* were discovered, and more buildings associated with the guilds. We now know much more of Ostia's trade, religion and public life, and the new evidence has stimulated much new writing. Most visits to Rome now include a day in the ruins of Ostia, enhanced by imaginative landscaping.

Gustav Hermansen is a devotee. He has studied the buildings in great detail over many years and he has already contributed useful articles on individual topics; in this book he caters for professionals and amateurs. Those who are familiar with the site will be most interested in the chapters dealing with establishments owned by the guilds, the analysis of the apartment in the big housing-blocks, and the application of Rome's building regulations to Ostia. It is clear that the

excavations inscriptions had revealed the names of many trade guilds and had thrown light on some of their activities, but there was very little evidence for the premises they occupied. Much more evidence is now available. Professor Hermansen has examined the common features and identified many buildings that were anonymous. Most impressive in this field is his examination of the *Caesetate di Terentia* which he shows to be part of a larger complex which includes a temple on the Decumanus dedicated to the deified emperor Perseus by the builders (*fabri lignarii*). It might be added that the dedication is particularly apt since Perseus is said to have got his cognomen from his pertinacity in the timber-trade. The attribution of the richly appointed *Scuola dei Tralano* to the *navicularii* rather than the *fabri navales* is also convincing.

His study of the standard apartment plan is based on his identification of the *medianum* of the *Digast* with the long room, with windows to draw light from street, garden or inner court, front which rooms open on three sides, two of them larger and better appointed than the rest. He regards this middle room as the most important in the apartment, where the cooking and eating were done, and where most of the day was spent. But while such a common room would be valuable in an apartment for *hupillares*, most of the apartments of this type which survive are handsomely decorated, and would be occupied by local compellions or successful traders who would not use a kitchen for a living room.

The evidence for Roman building standards is drawn mainly from the *Digast* and Tacitus' description of the new building regulations which Nero laid down for the rebuilding of Rome after the great fire of AD 64. As we should expect the new regulations seem to have applied also to Ostia, but

one would have welcomed an explanation of what was intended by the replacement of timbers by the less inflammable tufes in certain parts of buildings.

Those who are unfamiliar with Ostia might be advised to turn first to the more general chapters. A brief survey of all the bars, taverns and hostels; Ostia serves as a peg to put together all that is known from other sources of this type of building, their reputation, and the government's attitude to them. Similarly the fire risk is studied from the Ostian evidence, supplemented by what is known of Roman practice, enlivened by a description of fires in thirteenth century Constantinople quoted from a contemporary handbook for travellers; but one misses a description of the *sigpho*, the fireman's most important equipment.

This book is admirably planned. It is well illustrated with plans and photographs and the notes are helpful. It is also a good size for following the more difficult plans on the ground.

## The Hag's Daughter

Behind the church a limestone well  
Drips persistently on an old doll  
Left long ago to be turned to stone  
By her mother's so-called sorcery.

An old woman now, she has back-packed  
Her hump between the houses  
For eighty years. She never shared  
Her mother's indifference to these people.

Still they turn away in the street.  
Kindly enough, but reluctant to stand  
Long in her gaze - as if afraid that  
The sediment in her eyes may petrify.

Marion Lomax

As the first in an occasional series of Journal of the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, the book is published *Aphrodisias* and *Documents from the Excavations of the Centre at Aphrodisias*. The book is written by Professor Kenan T. Erim, who has some related texts by Reynolds (214pp plus 32pp of black and white illustrations. Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, 226, 0 90 7764 00 2). The book's volume consists of two articles, inscribed documents, bearing on the official relationship between the city of Aphrodisias and the Minor from the late republic to the third century AD, together with additional texts relevant to interpretation.



## Setting log upon log

Sergei Hackel

DAVID BUXTON

The Wooden Churches of Eastern Europe: An Introductory Survey  
405pp. Cambridge University Press.  
£42.50.  
0 521 23786 6

In 1934, when there were few such things about, a young English traveller published a book on Russian medieval churches. The book has figured in the appropriate bibliographies ever since, but it seemed curious that none other was forthcoming from its author's pen to supplement it over the ensuing years. In fact, the author was busy elsewhere and with other things. The book which he now publishes five decades later was well worth waiting for. Only an incidental phrase in its concluding pages (a reference to an axolotl) reveals that an entomologist's career intervened between these two Cambridge publications.

David Buxton's new book takes him back to the Soviet Union, and in preparation for it (1972-75) he reverted to his earlier role as traveller. But his canvas is broader, while his focus is more precise. Almost the whole of Eastern Europe is included in his study; and it is almost exclusively the wooden architecture - more precisely, the wooden church architecture - of the region which is his concern. At the same time, although he is dealing largely with the legacy of medieval times, the surviving monuments limit him largely to that great age of wooden architecture which begins in the seventeenth century and rises to its apogee in the eighteenth.

He gives his work the unassuming subtitle, "an introductory survey". False modesty? One might ask, when its four hundred or so pages are meticulously researched and provided with more than five hundred up-to-date original illustrations. It is an introduction, it is certainly not a perfunctory one. Yet introduction it necessarily remains, since it would be difficult to cite another work which covers quite this ground. Particular studies of Ukrainian, Carpatho-

Russian, North Russian, Finnish, Polish or Romanian wooden church architecture may be found, though not usually in English: whereas such a comparative study of these complex areas places each in a new perspective and casts fresh light on the cultural history of the whole.

At the same time, it is a survey in the best sense of the term. Unlike the turbulent Strzygowski, to whose indirect influence he pays generous if carefully qualified tribute, David Buxton is not seeking to establish any alternative theory about the nature of European architecture, still less of the European mind. On the contrary, his approach is sober, tentative, pragmatic; and while he presents the relevant evidence with due care, he prefers to withhold judgment rather than press his findings into the service of any one established view.

Of particular importance is Buxton's categorization of the structures he describes. In this respect he is not helped by the shifting and often arbitrary political boundaries of Central and Eastern Europe. Ethnic boundaries are much more to the point, and Buxton impressively reveals the integrity and importance of the local traditions developed by such peoples as the adventurous Lemks (divided between Poland, Slovakia and the western reaches of the Soviet Union) or the more conservative Boyks (formerly in Poland, now in the Ukraine). In turn, the character of such local traditions is determined less by whether they are Eastern European (indeed the book reveals that there can be no question of an essential "Eastern European" style), but rather by reference to the rite of the relevant builders and patrons. Thus the book divides naturally and justifiably into studies of Orthodox/Uniate, Catholic and Protestant styles. In Buxton's words: "The all-important factor is religious affiliation, which may or may not coincide with citizenship (though it usually coincides with language)."

This is not to say that liturgical factors are of primary interest to the author. On the contrary, references to such things are disappointingly rare. It is significant that it is only in the discussion of Protestant buildings that the question of acoustics is mentioned,

and even then only in passing. Rather is it the morphology of style in each milieu which fascinates Buxton above all. Hence the space devoted to building techniques and their evolution, especially the techniques required for structures using solid, horizontal logs (in Strzygowski's terminology, *blockbau*, in Buxton's, *blockwork*). In convincing terms he traces the development of rectangular into octagonal buildings, of octagonal towers into domes.

The simplest buildings can be of interest (and some Ruthenian churches are described as "endearing intimate"). But the book also provides a timely reminder that the study of these buildings is not as peripheral to the history of architecture as it has too often been allowed to remain. Indeed, among them are to be found "some of the most impressive and beautiful structures in all Europe". Names like Krivka and Novomoskovsk will now need to be added to the more familiar Kizhi in any serious account of Eastern Europe's architectural achievement.

Necessarily, Buxton thus broaches the vexed question of the relationship between wood and masonry buildings.



The late eighteenth-century church at Równia, near Ustrzyki Dolne, Poland, reproduced from the book reviewed here.

This in turn involves the relationship between locally developed and international styles, whether Byzantine or Baroque. Buxton's conclusions in either case are never doctrinaire. Whereas, with careful qualifications, he will allow for the influence of wood on masonry structures in Northern Russia, he will equally note the reverse in respect of Poland. And whereas it would only be natural to expect a dominant Byzantine influence in the Ukrainian plains after centuries of adherence to the Eastern rite, he detects comparatively little of it. However tentative the conclusions he draws from such findings, they could provide correctives in a number of related fields. Thus the influence of Ukrainian Baroque on the so-called Moscow Baroque at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries has been well established over the years; but fresh consideration could now be given to the contribution made by the wooden structures of the Eastern Ukraine to the development of each in turn.

David Buxton manifestly enjoyed his search for the surviving buildings in countries and outcountrysides which (as often as not) are difficult of access.

Indeed, the more isolated the monument, the greater his delight in locating it. It is also clear that his delight in the achievements of these largely anonymous craftsmen who work he describes. But it is in the nature of a survey to probe aesthetic criteria for the appreciation of these buildings are taken to be granted, and the author's own contents himself with only the briefest of evaluations. We read of a "delightful composition" or of something which "pleases to the eye"; occasionally we learn of an "artistic disaster". "Commodity, firmness and delight" were the qualities Sir Henry Wotton sought in fine architecture: all in a "delight" and even "commodity" given less consideration here than the questions of structural "firmness".

Firm though they are, the magnificent structures cannot remain vulnerable. Throughout the ages they have been subject to destruction by fire. The twentieth century, with its wars, its anti-religious campaigns and (in regard to the no extinct and much regretted wooden synagogues) its antisemitism, has artificially and often consciously reduced their number to a small degree; many of the buildings which Buxton photographed in the 1920s are no longer to be found. More recently, however, it has also devised countermeasures. The proliferation of open air museums, albeit at the cost of depriving buildings of their locale and their natural habitat, has enabled both the conservationist and the traveller's task. David Buxton clearly in two minds about such conservation. There is no doubt that he has found much to admire in the museums of Lvov, Kiev or Sevastopol. At the same time he feels impelled to end his excellent and admirably produced work with a pointed comment on his monument "commodity".

In some at least of the countries surveyed village churches are still played that part in the spiritual life of the people for which they were created and evolved. Museum sites are used and evolved. Museum sites are used and evolved. Museum sites are used and evolved.

## In love as in war

T. P. Matheson

A. R. HUMPHREYS (Editor)  
*Much Ado About Nothing*  
237pp. Methuen. £11.50 (paperback, £2.40).  
0 416 17990 8

In all the proliferation of new Shakespeare editions, many serve only to confirm that the goals of the Shakespearean editor have not radically altered since Theobald formulated them in 1733 as "the Emendation of corrupt Passages; the Explanation of obscure and difficult ones; and an Inquiry into the Beauties and Defects of Composition". In these terms *Much Ado About Nothing* presents a relatively straightforward task. There is general scholarly agreement on the important matters of date, text and sources; and the play's continuing theatrical popularity might imply a similar coherence and consistency of critical response.

A. R. Humphreys's revision for the new Arden Edition of Grace R. Carey's 1924 Arden *Much Ado* does not represent the kind of fundamental evaluation of the play in the light of new knowledge and new opinion that has been required of some recent editors. Most of the factual considerations affecting the play were already sufficiently clear in 1924, and the present editor sometimes needs to do no more than reconsider, re-order, and rephrase long-established conclusions. The continuous debt to the work of his predecessor, particularly in the illustrative material of the commentary, where many notes are taken over almost verbatim, is properly acknowledged by Professor Humphreys in his preface. Other original notes are drastically abbreviated to reduce the amount of secondary illustration: nine pages of commentary on *chance* page 111.68 are reduced to nineteen. Easiest discursiveness is curbed to

improve clarity and relevance, but with inevitable allusive impoverishment. Documentation (from post-1924 reference books such as Tilly's *Dictionary of Proverbs*) replaces quotation.

It is surprising in a greatly enlarged introduction to find how little opinion has shifted on the origin and transmission of the text of the play. The present text is based, in common with all its competitors, on the quarto of 1600, printed by Valentine Simmes after two entries in the Stationers' Register (one to "stay", and one to "print") in August of the same year. Seventeen copies survive, without significant textual variation, and the printing has been carefully investigated

by Craig Ferguson and Charlton Hinman, who conclude that it was set by one compositor, casting off his copy - Shakespeare's own manuscript. The presence of actors' names in some quarto speech-prefixes ("Kemp" for Dogberry and "Coley" for Verges in IV.2) encouraged the New Cambridge and old Arden editors to identify the copy for the quarto as a theatrical prompt-book, and other inconsistencies in speech-prefixes and stage-directions (such as the entry of "phantom" Innogen, Leonato's wife, who neither speaks nor is spoken to) suggested to Dover Wilson that Shakespeare was perhaps revising an old play.

But these very inconsistencies now seem to make it more likely that we are dealing with Shakespeare's own "foul papers", a partly unrevised draft containing a number of unrealized authorial intentions and some typical authorial imprecision in stage-directions (as at V.3 "and three or four with tapers"). After some unmethodical tidying-up by the book-keeper this copy was possibly retained for use in the theatre - although this aspect of the copy's history is inevitably more obscure than its fate in the printing-shop. Common features and common errors in the next printed version, the Folio of 1623, seem a clear indication of derivative status, despite differences affecting stage-directions, act divisions, the omission of five short passages, and many minor textual variations, presumably the result of someone marking up a copy of the 1600 quarto.

Humphreys, without abandoning the general procedure of modernization, commits this edition strongly to the quarto, particularly to its pattern in contrast to the folio, of relatively light punctuation: "However much or little Q's punctuation is actually Shakespeare's it often serves his dramatic purposes expressively, and when it does it is worth preserving more obscure than its fate in the printing-shop. Common features and common errors in the next printed version, the Folio of 1623, seem a clear indication of derivative status, despite differences affecting stage-directions, act divisions, the omission of five short passages, and many minor textual variations, presumably the result of someone marking up a copy of the 1600 quarto."

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Characteristically, in a comedy, Shakespeare ignores the historical and political inspiration he might have derived from the date and setting of Bandello's tale, emphasizing exclusively social and human aspects. Bandello sets the story in the bloody period of the Sicilian Vespers (1282), after the Aragonese, led by King Pedro, seized Sicily, defeated Charles II of Naples, and transferred the court from Palermo to Messina. Thus, Shakespeare's multinational force (Don Pedro from Aragon, Benedick from Padua, Claudio from Florence), revealing after slaughter, might well have experienced the tension between an alien ruling aristocracy and its native subjects and collaborators. But Shakespeare rejects any political dimension and the only human echo of it in the play is in the final exclusion of Don Pedro the Spaniard from the interfamily marriages of the Italians.

Until disrupted by intrigue, the World of Messina (as Humphreys terms it) is a familiar society of familiar friends, and no recent production seems to have differentiated Spaniard from Italian within that initially comfortable social world. Humphreys is sceptical of and unsympathetic to what he calls "the sociologically earnest mood of some modern critics" who find the seeds of Claudio's and Don Pedro's callous indifference to Hero's suffering in the creation of a frivolous society inhabited by frivolous people, a society of spies and peepers, in which Don John's malignity is merely an extension of the shallow values of a masculine officer-class. A correct reading, in his view, must balance the elements of gay and grave in the play, must give the proper weight to Claudio and Hero (despite their apparently pallid characterization), and must prevent the robust exuberance of Beatrice and Benedick from dominating the cautious and passive romantic lovers: "Tragic potential within prevalent comedy is of the play's essence." However, despite a resolute attempt to redress the balance in his introduction, which devotes proportionately less attention to the two invented actions than to the archetypal Hero-Claudio plot, Humphreys is so responsive to the brilliance of form and expression throughout the play that he underestimates the serious concerns which characterize the very brilliance of style and construction reveals, and has no time for what have been called the "anti-tragic" elements of the sex war.

A long section of the introduction, using recent research, is devoted to the interpretation of the play on the stage, particularly in this century; essential for a play whose stage effects (seeing, overhearing and interpreting) exploit the nature of theatre itself, which requires us to see, overhear and interpret the simulations of those who try to make us believe that all is true.

## With benefit of clergy

Robin Cormack

HENRY MAGUIRE

*Art and Eloquence in Byzantium*  
148pp., plus 111 black-and-white illustrations. Guildford: Friarston University Press. £22.80.  
0 691 0372 0

The old view that Byzantine art was an unchanging "style" produced for over a thousand years is no longer acceptable. (If not dead), it has been replaced by the recognition of subtle but significant shifts of expression within a conservative culture. It is one thing for the art historian to recognize changes over the period (whether these are seen as progressions, regressions, zigzags, etc.), and another to go beyond description to explanation. The attraction of *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium* is that it attempts historical explanations for changes in Byzantine art from the fifth to the fifteenth century, and in doing so, brings into the discussion texts of the period which even Byzantinists have tended to ignore.

The claim argued for in the book is, as Henry Maguire says, a simple one: "that the sermons and hymns of the Byzantine church influenced the ways in which Byzantine artists illustrated narrative texts". He also pursues another argument, at a different level: that a training in grammar and rhetoric played an important part in the education of the Byzantine clergy. Because the textbooks of rhetoric used in this education were either composed in Late Antiquity, or were essentially updated versions of ones which had been (and thus incorporated the methods of pagan orators), Maguire is inclined to emphasize the continuity of

these relationships deserves to be explored. But, it must be said, not all the suggestions made here are equally convincing, even if one were to accept the framework within which they are argued. Two particular cases may help to illustrate the kind of problems which are raised.

The popular group of saints, the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, play a prominent role in the argument. Maguire claims that after the end of Iconoclasm in 843, artists representing their dying moments radically changed the previous conventions for depicting the martyrdom, and that the change occurred through the influence of fourth-century Patriotic sermons; in the early period, he argues, the martyrs, freezing to death on the ice of a lake, were shown in impassive poses of prayer, whereas in the tenth century the actual physical horrors of such a death were portrayed. Maguire derives this "new" portrayal from a famous sermon of St Basil. The difficulty is that his characterization of the earlier, supposedly standard iconography rests on only two surviving versions, both in the church of St Maria Antiqua in Rome and both "provincial" works of the seventh century. Their evidence is too tenuous to support the characterization of a "norm" and so the whole case for a tenth-century innovation is inconclusive (Maguire's qualification that, even if the tortures were shown in lost pre-iconoclastic works, some evolution for the rejection of the St Maria Antiqua tradition would be necessary, reads as special pleading).

The second case leads to difficulties of a different kind, and concerns the principle by which scenes were arranged across the architecture of churches. Maguire argues that in the twelfth-century church of St George at

Kurbinoovo (in Yugoslavia), the Christ child held in the arms of the Virgin in the apse somehow mirrors the pose of the soul of the Virgin herself as held by Christ in the scene of the Koimesis which was painted on the west wall of this basilica. This visual interpretation is not easy to accept, but it is used in support of a claim that the rhetorical figure of antithesis lay behind the planning of such decorative schemes. The further problem here is that Maguire makes no attempt to modify this theory in the face of the probability of just such binary oppositions being stressed within any religious system of evocation, and particularly that of Christianity.

There can be no doubt that this book will help in the appreciation of certain iconographical nuances in the works of art discussed, but it also poses the question whether its terms of reference are acceptable as a basis for further studies. Maguire writes of his "small sampling... many other scenes and subjects common to Byzantine art and literature await exploration", and his selection is a fairly random one. An insight into his way of thinking may be got from his reference to the influence of rhetoric on art as being a relationship between "two media". Maguire takes the correlation between a literary text and a work of art to be indicative of a temporal influence of the first on the second, and the theoretical implications of this are bound to worry us. The book tells us very little about the nature of the texts he has selected (sermons and hymns), though few readers will know their peculiar conventions; there is little specific information about the services in the Orthodox Church (this information still needs to be extracted from the great corpus of Ehrhard). Yet we are

bound to suppose that the complexities of expression to be found in Byzantine sermons were far less accessible to artists and to the public than were the words of familiar hymns; but Maguire does not explore this distinction. Despite the care he takes to match text with image, the feeling may linger that anything one wants can be found in a sermon and that the "sermon" in the Bible or the Apocrypha, or in commentaries on the same, may also provide the text. One may also regret that Maguire has not drawn more on the growing scholarly literature of rhetoric and discourse, or on the history of art.

If one takes sermons, hymns and works of art to be interconnected strands of the mesh making up a religious culture, then one is bound to be concerned to see correlations between them as pointers to structures of thought and symbolism rather than as mutual influences. In this respect, the books of Michael Baxandall give us guidance to the ways in which the Renaissance sermons can help to decode the historical structure of pictorial thinking. Of course it is possible to argue that some of the works of art were "suggested" by the words of a sermon, and were possibly conveyed to the artist by way of sermon notes. It is difficult, however, to see the criteria for recognizing this procedure. Henry Maguire is bringing to the attention of Byzantinists the need to read these (for the most part) unillustrated sermons, and this is a major omission. The Preface declares that "there is no section on the architecture of the playhouses", to avoid overlapping with Volume III. It would indeed be unnecessary to match

## Between postscript and prelude

Trevor R. Griffiths

Lois POTTER (General Editor)  
*The Revels' History of Drama in English*  
Volume IV 1613-1660.  
370pp. Methuen. £25.  
0 416 13050 X

Since its inception, the value of *The Revels' History of Drama in English* has been limited by the idiosyncratic chronological divisions chosen for individual volumes. The years 1613 to 1660 could benefit considerably from treatment in their own right, rather than as a postscript to Shakespeare or a prelude to the Restoration. Despite the various theatrical activities of the Commonwealth period, the rebirth of a legitimate professional theatre in England remains a genuine watershed in dramatic history. However, Shakespeare's retirement and the closing down of the Globe in 1613 mark a less convincing divide and the careers of Jonson, Middleton, Dekker, Heywood, Webster and Chapman all cut across this chronological division, thus limiting the scope for discussion of their writing in Volume IV. The difficulty here is exacerbated by the fact that *The White Devil*, *The Duchess of Malfi* and *Bartholomew Fair* all within this time, are discussed in Volume III, thus leaving three major works from the playwrights' 1613-42.

This critical discussion, by Kathleen McLuskie, makes many interesting observations about individual dramatic works, but is much less convincing in its overview of the period. The better known plays and dramatists are handled more confidently than the lesser ones, but, although this is the longest section in the volume, there is little by the author to develop what is another in an effort to cover the ground. The material is not always organized in the most helpful fashion:

the main consideration of Middleton is in a section on satiric drama; Platonic masques, Platonic love and Pastoral plays are discussed as separate topics; the masque and the relationships between public and private performances form a constant thread, but the issues are dealt with piecemeal. Despite the constraints Kathleen McLuskie produces some good individual discussions, in particular of the relationship between printed text and stage action, as exemplified in stage directions.

The period after 1642, when organized professional theatre was suppressed, offers another major challenge since there is inevitably rather less material to discuss. Although Lois Potter examines the significant and interesting dramatic literature of the Commonwealth, including the *Castles Ashby* manuscripts, she makes no extravagant claims for the output of this period. Indeed one would have welcomed more enthusiasm in both the sections on dramatic literature: despite the Preface's rejection of traditional views of the period as one of decline, both sections are marked by a degree of concessive defensiveness about the quality of the work discussed.

The most assured part of the volume is, not surprisingly, by Professor G. E. Bentley, who details his unrivalled knowledge of "the theatres and the actors" into fifty-three masterly concise and lucid pages, performing a clearly defined task with practised economy and skill. Professor Edwards's complementary discussion of "Society and the theatre" is more anecdotal but, although the anecdotes are often interesting in their own right, they do not constitute an overall view.

There is no large-scale consideration of acting, theatre buildings and the nature of the scenery used in theatrical performances, and this is a major omission. The Preface declares that "there is no section on the architecture of the playhouses", to avoid overlapping with Volume III. It would indeed be unnecessary to match

Richard Hosley's joist-by-joist analysis of theatres from the earlier work, but this policy also means that there are no substantial discussions of Inigo Jones's contributions to the development of the English theatre, and that John Webb is mentioned only once.

The illustrations, which might have illuminated the examination of masques and staging considerably, are rather disappointing. Some are familiar but important enough to justify reproduction, but several of the portraits are rather uninformative. Three of the plates of masque costumes have been badly captioned so that their significance and relationship to the text is only revealed by a careful scanning of the contents pages. The cover picture of John Lowin is captioned to indicate that he was the original Volpone, Sir Epicure Mammon, Melantius, Henry VIII and Bosola, but only one of the plays in which these characters appear falls within the scope of this volume. These points, relatively trivial in themselves, are symptomatic of a general lack of coherence in the series and of a raggedness in the organization of this volume.

Despite the efforts of the individual contributors and the quality of their contributions, the initial decision to split the consideration of pre-Restoration drama at 1613, coupled with the problems posed by contributors withdrawing, has resulted in a flawed work. This is a pity in view of the sound desire to consider seriously a period which has tended to be the poor relation in works covering both Elizabethan and Stuart theatre. But it is also true that the contributions between the theatre and drama of the periods before and after 1613 are ultimately too great to permit a fully informative, independent discussion within the format of this volume. *The Revels' History of Drama in English*, Volume IV, offered an opportunity to consolidate and make accessible recent critical insight and scholarly discovery and to advance the period's considerable claims to interest. Unfortunately the opportunity has been at best only half grasped.

Date and literary genetics (at least for the main plot) are equally transparent. The omission of the play from Francis Meres's list (1598) offers an earlier limit and Kemp's departure from the Lord Chamberlain's Men in 1599 a later. The work of Prouty, Muir and Bullough has made the identification and analysis of sources equally authoritative and precise. Of the many and ancient analogues for the story of a lover tricked into believing his mistress false, Humphreys finds Bandello's twenty-second tale from *La Prima Parte de la Novella* (1554) closest to Shakespeare, interwoven with materials from Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*. From Bandello Shakespeare seems to derive: the setting in Messina; the names of Pedro and Leonato; the fact of Claudio's military service; courtship through a "noble intermediary; the deceiver's disguised agent; the lover's public rejection of his supposedly false bride; the religious assurances which buoy up the Heroine's friends; the sequence of *awakened, revived, self-defence, presumed death, obsequies, and exequies*; Claudio's *whimpering and whimpering*; the offer of a substitute bride through his brother; the acceptance and marriage to a vetted, unknown lady; the revelation, followed by princely festivities.

Yet there are significant differences, quite apart from Shakespeare's counterpointed secondary actions involving Beatrice and Benedick and

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# Communicating the conscious

E. L. Epstein

## ANN BANFIELD

Unspokeable Sentences: Narration and representation in the language of fiction  
340pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.  
£15.95.  
0 7100 0905 4

Chomsky has asserted a number of times recently that language may not be essentially, or even primarily, a medium of communication but is rather a medium of expression that can be used for communication. This provocative thesis receives confirmation from Ann Banfield's important new book, in which she conducts a microscopic study of the language of literature as composed of linguistic expressions. Those who consider "communication" to be a magic word may be moved by this book to consider exactly what the term means.

Banfield starts by combating the theory of Tzvetan Todorov and others that literature is essentially a mode of communication, between a Speaker (the author, combined with a narrator) and an (assumed) Hearer/Addresser (the audience). This "dual-voice" theory is attacked and left dead in the dust; as she writes at the end of the strictly analytical part of the book:

[the dual-voice communication theory] pronounces itself on the basis of unsupported linguistic assumptions and then retreats into the imprecise language of literary criticism when a counter-theory undercuts these assumptions. For this reason it proceeds no farther than a traditional criticism. A rigorous linguistic argumentation, on the other hand, takes us to the limits of present knowledge and confronts us with the well-formulated problems which remain, now, theory of pseudo-explanations and not, as before, theory of the deceptive ways of talking. The author has definitively disappeared from the text and is locatable henceforth only outside it. We turn to the objectified text, which must be held together by some other hypothesis than that of the narrator's voice.

In all this, linguistic argumentation has also revealed features of literary language which remain otherwise closed to us or penetrable only by intermittent flashes of insight.

Banfield then begins with direct and indirect discourse, and with the linguistic generalizations derived therefrom proceeds to analyse other sorts of sentences, most of them from English, Irish, American and French authors (she takes examples from more than sixty-five writers in all). The sentences of direct and indirect discourse are "spokeable"; indeed, they either report speech, or are actually spoken. In them the communicative function is very strong. Consider the following sentences,

which are derived (slightly altered) from a famous "communication", the first over the newly invented telephone (my example):

Time: March 10, 1876 2:10 pm  
Place: a room in the rented top floor of a Boston rooming house  
ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL (*Yells some acid by accident on his clothes, and exclaims into a small device on the table before him*):  
Mr Watson! Come here! I want you!

Time: same, date 2:10 and five seconds  
Place: another room in the same Boston rooming house  
MR WATSON (*speaks excitedly into a small device on the table before him*):  
Yes, sir! I hear you! I am coming!

According to the extension of Chomskyan theory that Banfield employs, we have here two expressions (symbolized by E). Each of the E's contains three subsidiary E's. In this case exclamations and sentences. The presence of "you" in both expressions, a clear sign of "communication" as defined by the author, ensures that these really are communications. In each, each Speaker is expressing his Self to a Hearer/Addresser; according to who is speaking the reference of "I" and "you" shifts; in each utterance the time is the Present-Now, and the place is the Here, which also shifts from Speaker to Speaker, from room to room. All is seen from the subjective point of view, which regards itself as the occupant of a subjective universe with its own person, place and time.

Consider, however, what happens if Bell is reminding to a reporter twenty-four years after the event:

Time: March 10, 1900 10:00 am  
Place: a room in a house in New York City  
ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL (*to reporter*):  
"I called out, 'Mr. Watson! Come here! I want you!', and he called out that he had heard me and that he was coming."

Many changes have taken place. Only the bare propositional content of Watson's expression remains: "he had heard me", and "he was coming". All the signs of Speaker have disappeared from Watson's statement - the "I's" have become "he's"; the tense has changed from Watson's Present-Now into Bell's Past-Then. Watson has even lost his exclamations, the signs of his subjective reaction to events: "Yes, sir!" is gone, as well as his other exclamations.

In her text, Banfield describes more than half a dozen signs of a subjectivity that cannot express itself with the advent of indirect discourse. One of the most interesting is the so-called "evaluative" adjectives. If some person X says, "Sam is going to marry that lovely girl, Susan", the speech could be reported by Y as "X says that Sam is going to marry that appalling girl, Susan". Y has reached into X's statement and given his own opinion.

Banfield observes at 0 is point that one speaker cannot express the subjectivity of another. Only by allowing that other speaker to use his own words (in direct discourse) can someone else's Self speak for itself. When this is not retained, the status of Speaker, and of Speaker's Now, is lost.

From this principle Banfield turns to examine specifically literary forms of language like that of the Free Indirect Style, which she calls Represented Speech and Thought. Imagine that our reporter, having taken careful notes on his conversation with Bell, then wrote a story in literary form containing the following expressions:

Mr Bell then called over his telephone apparatus to Mr Watson. Mr Watson! Come here! He wanted him! cried Mr Bell. And Yes sir! he heard him! He was coming! cried Mr Watson.

Here what seem to be some of the signs of the Self have crept back - the exclamations and exclamation - marks are restored - while others are still missing - the "I's" have not returned, nor have the "you's", and the tenses stay obstinately in the Past. There are two subjectivities, two Selves, that do not speak for themselves.

Banfield describes the status of Free Indirect Style in terms of the presence or absence of Speakers, and the presence or absence of Present tenses.

Mr Watson! Come here! He wanted him! cried Mr Bell. And Yes sir! he heard him! He was coming! cried Mr Watson.

"Mr Watson! Come here! He wanted him! cried Mr Bell" is one large E-node, or expressive whole. This contains a "subject of consciousness", a Self. However, the Self lacks a Speaker, because the "E-node" lacks "I's" and contains third-person references. (Note that "Mr Watson! Come here! I cried" would be read as containing a Speaker because of the first-person "I.") "Yes sir! he heard him!" was coming! cried Mr Watson." is another "E-node" with a Self but no Speaker. These are "unspokeable sentences" indeed. In addition, the Now which all these single E's contain lacks a Present, so all the moments of speech are past, as these sentences suggest.

Having described the strictly literary but minor form of Free Indirect Style, Banfield now takes up the two major forms of narrative-fiction - sentences of narration, and sentences that express consciousness.

The first dismisses the notion that narration and consciousness need have ties with communication. The communicative functions of language are exercised by what she calls discourse. Banfield's careful definition of communicative discourse - expressions that contain a Speaker and an actual present Addressee/Hearer, and a Present which describes the moment of utterance - clearly excludes a narrative sentence "which may or may not contain a Speaker, but which has no Addressee/Hearer, no Present, and no Here and Now". Presumably, since there is no Now, there cannot be a Self in narrative sentences; the Now is the moment of individual consciousness, and without some moment of consciousness, the Self cannot exist. Narrative sentences lack all of the distinguishable signs of communication. The sentences of narrative are, then, purely expressive. In addition, since they lack a Self, which could be ironically mistaken about the facts of a situation, they represent "the incontrovertible truth of the fiction".

Banfield is at her subtle best when she describes the other sort of purely expressive sentence, the "sentence which represents consciousness". If I understand her correctly she defines these sentences as "possibly lacking Speakers, and as lacking Addressee/Hearers (of course), and Present, but as containing Now (individual moments of consciousness). They also lack a time of utterance and a Speaking voice. Hence the shift in French from the *présent* to the *imparfait* signals a shift from narrated discrete events to moments of perception.

Un matin avant le jour, le Tétrarque Hérode-Antipas vint s'accouder, et regarda.  
Les montagnes, immédiatement sous lui, commençaient à découvrir leurs crêtes, pendant que leur masse, jusqu'au fond des abîmes, était encore dans l'ombre. Un brouillard flottait, il se déchira, et les contours de la mer Morte apparurent. L'aube, qui se levait derrière Machaerous, épanchait une rougeur.  
(Flaubert, "Hérodiade")

The sentences in the *passé simple* describe the objective facts; the *imparfait* represents the observations of a sensibility, perhaps Herod's.

Here the Self is unspokeable. It expresses a passive consciousness - the eye that sees but regards not, the ear that hears but listens not, the judgment that absorbs but does not discriminate. Only those perceptions that are of crucial value to the observing consciousness will ever attain to the rank of represented thought or reproduced utterance. Irony can be admitted when the sentences of narration yield to sentences expressing consciousness, which have a Self who can be mistaken.

Support for the existence of this specialized consciousness is adduced from Descartes, Russell and Sartre. Russell for example, writes

Suppose you are out walking on a wet day, and you see a puddle and avoid it. You are not likely to say to yourself: "there is a puddle; it will be advisable not to step in it." But if somebody said "why did you suddenly step aside?" you would answer "because I didn't wish to step into that puddle." You know, retrospectively, that you had a visual perception . . . and you express this knowledge in words. But in what sense, if your attention had not been called to the matter by the questioner? . . . Can one remember what one never knew? That depends on the meaning of the word "know".

This non-reflective consciousness is reported in sentences representing consciousness; *reflective consciousness*, however, is reported by represented (speech and) thought, that is, in free indirect style, or even by direct quotation. The difference is usually apparent in the text.

Banfield then embarks on a search for the historical roots of these Speakerless and specifically literary forms, and for the origins of fiction.

First she attempts to discover the point at which the Free Indirect Style entered Western literature. This seems to be in the seventeenth century in French (with La Fontaine), in the eighteenth century in German with Goethe, and in the eighteenth century in English, perhaps with Fielding, but certainly by the time of Jane Austen.

Banfield finds this dating significant: it is the beginning of the period of inexpensive printed books. She argues that their advent created a "speech form divorced from the actual presence of the Speaker, and therefore allowing the possibility of 'unspokeable sentences'". She finds in the written text the source of all of the specifically literary sentences she has analysed: represented speech and thought, narrative sentences and sentences expressing a non-reflective consciousness.

These last she posits as the source of narrative fictionally, since they even fictionalize history. If a historiographer injects consciousness-sentences into his text, that part of the text is thereby fictionalized. If for example some popular historian writes: "Napoleon invaded Belgium in the middle of June, 1815, crossing the border at Charleroi. June 17 dawned bright and clear. Napoleon stood on the battlefield of Waterloo," he is writing sentences of pure history that remain incontrovertible because they contain no *énoncé*. The morning fog, rising, it was going to be a fine day; the reader may feel obscurely that the fiction has begun.

Banfield comments: But we need not pursue the problem of fictionality any further in this direction to arrive at the *différence*

specifica of narrative fiction: linguistic forms. For narrative fiction, as we know, is not the sentences of narration, which is a sentence which can only be fictionally true. The sentences representing [non-reflective] consciousness is not, however, to be found in historical narration. Or rather, when it occurs there, it introduces the fictional into the historical text. . . . They are a sign that we have entered the realm of fiction, or, at least, where what can be documented passes into what must always remain speculative - the inner workings of another, i.e. of another than the speaker's consciousness.

We here can recall her earlier principle, "one speaker cannot express the subjectivity of another", but we must add "without fictionalizing the text". With *Unspokeable Sentences* we have a work by a linguist who knows where the important literary problems lie. The book should be required reading for literary critics (and also for linguists). This is not to say that Banfield has tied up all loose ends, or that some of her examples could not be strengthened from a slightly different perspective. Speech act theory, for example, approaches some of the problems she treats from an interesting angle. Let us name these are now five broad categories of speech-acts; let us call them Quasi Imperatives, Declarations, Assertions and Exclamations. Of these the last three urgently require a "you", when you can reasonably expect to give information, or change the world by you, or become altered by your Declarations. However, the need for a second person does not seem to be urgently present in Assertions and Exclamations. If literature consists essentially of Assertive or Exclamatory speech-acts, these pragmatic conditions allow literary "speech-acts" to be stubbornly uncommunicative.

Literature is by its nature separate from an actual occasion of speech. Present-Now. It can be described as a type of *preserved utterance*, whose "hearers" are absent, although they may attend subsequent "performances" of the literary text. This necessary loss of "contiguity" in literary speech acts may suggest that literature consists of mitigated Exclamations or Assurances, since in these and in contiguity-condition is only weakly required.

Nor does Banfield solve completely the problem of fictionality. Sentences expressing non-reflective consciousness may distinguish pure fiction from pure history, but what distinguishes pure fiction from fictionalized history? An important element of fictionality seems to me, is the use of the referential to proper nouns. (The Alexandrian pastoral romances were "fictions" in this sense long before La Fontaine or Jane Austen.) If a purely historical life of Napoleon were rewritten changing the actual names of people and places and things to non-referential ones, a work of fiction would thereby be created. Here is a "fiction" with no sentences representing non-reflective consciousness. In other words, the roots of modern narrative may go deeper than the seventeenth century.

Critics, however, should be able to find in Ann Banfield's book new tools of analysis.

*French Literary Theory: a Reader* has recently been published (Cambridge University Press, 270pp., £25.95, 0 521 23881 2). Edited by Tzvetan Todorov, one of the world's leading experts on the *nouveau*, *encyclopédisme* of French literary theory, it is an excellent anthology of studies by French literary theorists representing the most significant contributions to the field made in France in the last fifteen years. The essays, mostly unpublished in English, cover such topics as the "methodology of literary studies", the specificity of literary creation, and the issue raised by the classification of literary genres and periods. They include "Criticism and poetics" by Genette; "What is a descriptive effect?" by Roland Barthes.

## POLITICS

# Appealing to the masses

S. J. Woolf

J. BREULLY  
Nationalism and the State  
211pp. Manchester University Press.  
£15.95.  
0 7190 0692 9

Of the great historical myths of the modern world, nationalism has proved to be the most effective. The nationalist ideology of the right of "nations" themselves defining their individuality, to exist as sovereign, independent states, has conquered the world in a uniquely undisputed manner, unlike (for example) liberalism or communism. The legacy of nationalism has permeated modern society, conditioning our minds to the extent that even opponents of the creation and existence of nation-states as historically inevitable and hence "natural".

This historical determinism has coloured most critical writings on nationalism, from those searching for its intellectual origins (Kohn, Hayes, Cobden, Cobden, Kedourie) to more general accounts of the emergence of nation-states (Schaffer, Seton-Watson), and the innumerable histories of particular countries. For the earlier period of European nationalism (say, up to 1914), the religious nationalists' theological assertions about the existence of a nation's cultural identity and the weakening and diffusion of its national consciousness constitute the acknowledged terrain of discussion. These assertions are usually accepted, even those who dispute them never question the existence of a "national consciousness". In the later period, when nationalism assumed more aggressive and destructive forms, this dogmatism could be explained in terms of fundamental "defects" in the process of formation of the nation-state, or even more loosely as weaknesses of "national character".

Students of the post-colonial world outside Europe have tended to interpret decolonization - once more

following the version presented by indigenous opponents of foreign rule - as the assertion of their identity by pre-existing cultural groups (tribes, ethnic or religious units), albeit within sometimes artificial frontiers imposed by the colonial power.

What is common to all these interpretations is acceptance of the objective existence of a "nation", that is, of a population, usually in a more or less precisely defined territory, which becomes politically significant as its self-awareness is aroused, at least among a minority of its élites. Why or even how nationalism is so effective and powerful are questions that tend either not to be asked or to be answered in terms proposed by the nationalists themselves. As John Breuilly aptly puts it, nationalism "becomes either a non-rational force which erupts into history or a mask to be stripped away in order to locate the 'real' forces beneath".

The central concern of Breuilly's important book is to remove this transcendental or instrumental interpretation of nationalism by examining it less as an ideology than as a concrete political movement with specific goals - primarily that of gaining or exercising power. In the process he presents and criticizes a range of widely accepted, but usually poorly formulated theories relating to nationalism, such as those of "national character"; of nationalism's class basis, of its culturally or ethnically "natural" quality of tribal or other sub-nationalities, of big business and fascism, of the modernizing impact of nationalism, of the national "integration" of the working class, of revolutionary peasant nationalism, and of the propensity towards nationalism among intellectuals.

Nationalist ideology, for Breuilly, assumes a subordinate function as one, albeit crucially important, instrument by which a nationalist leadership seeks to obtain mass support. Why nationalism should have been more effective than other ideologies in obtaining such support is explained by its ability to transform sentiments or practices habitually accepted as belonging to the "private sphere" (family, community, solidarity, etc) into "public" values, as symbols and

ceremonies particularly fitted to the situation and social groups for which they are intended. In the end, Breuilly's argument is not entirely satisfactory, but maybe it is not possible to provide a wholly rational explanation for irrational behaviour. After all how, rationally, can one explain why individuals of completely different origin, background and experience have continued to voice their support for their own nationalism, in such different places and contexts as Nasser's Cairo, May Day in Moscow, Soweto, the Emperor's anniversary in Japan or, most recently during the Falklands War, the Plaza Major in Buenos Aires and the local elections in Britain?

But Breuilly's main concern is with nationalist political action. Here he has made a fundamental contribution, which makes all previous writings on nationalism look dated. He has attempted, with considerable success, the extremely ambitious task of comparing nationalist movements, over time and place, in order to offer an explanation both of the conditions necessary for such movements to become significant, and of the implications of the relationship between the political context and the specific form of nationalism.

Nationalism is firmly defined as a modern phenomenon, which could only arise in the context of the modern state. Although nationalism as a vague sentiment of support for the "nation", usually expressed against a foreign threat, can be found much earlier, Breuilly excludes it from his definition precisely because it remains essentially a cultural manifestation. The difference between his and earlier approaches can be neatly summarized in his treatment of nineteenth-century European nationalism. Breuilly accepts the importance of the French Revolution in establishing the concept of the sovereignty of the people as a necessary basis for nationalism, but he does not accept any automatic transition from this cultural idea to the political movements of the nineteenth century. Nationalism only becomes significant when it shifts its basis away from a cultural identity (by intellectual sleight-of-hand, as Breuilly puts it) into

a deliberate attempt to gain the support of social groups hitherto ignored or excluded from the political community. Nationalism arises among the élites of the political community in opposition to the growth or demands of the modern state. It requires the support of many different élites, but more habitually needs to mobilize broader groups among the population.

Of fundamental importance for Breuilly is the way in which the political and institutional structure of the state against which individual nationalists react conditions the form and ultimate possibility of success. Modern bureaucratic channels are required, through which the nationalist leadership can both collaborate and express its opposition, so acquiring credibility internally and legitimacy in the eyes of foreign states, according to its ability to mobilize hitherto excluded social groups by linking local, intermediate and national levels of political action. By concentrating on this almost dialectical relationship between the centralizing, often reforming thrust of the state and the nationalist response it arouses, Breuilly is able to offer a historically convincing explanation of the multiple forms nationalism has taken in the past two centuries. His use of the role of the state to explain both European and anti-nationalist nationalisms is particularly revealing and effective.

But by concentrating on this relationship with the state he is equally able to draw out the fundamental differences between nationalism in a world with relatively few nation-states and in one where nation-states have become the norm. Breuilly effectively strips nationalism of its claim to be an historical "natural" phenomenon, and demonstrates its emergence as a construct. In a world of nation-states where some but not other nationalisms have achieved power, these rival sub- or pan-nationalisms are unlikely to succeed, not least because of the reluctance of existing states to upset their territorial arrangements.

Breuilly's conclusion is that nationalism is strongest as an opposition movement, and only in exceptional circumstances (turning against "anti-national" groups, or "nation-building" in new states) likely to form more than one element in a state's foreign policy.

In this ambitious panorama, it is inevitable that the reader will disagree over details. Breuilly's deeper knowledge of Germany than of Italy seems to have led him to dismiss the importance of the nationalist élite in pre-unification Italy (in terms of the local landed gentry and of business support) and to treat the nationalist aspects of Italian fascism somewhat summarily. His choice of case-studies for anti-colonial forms of nationalism is regrettably anglocentric (with the sole exception of the Belgian Congo, which he uses as a counter-factual example of the absence of the conditions necessary for nationalism).

But these are minor matters which do not take away from the importance of this study. The strength of Breuilly's interpretation lies in three particular qualities. First, the remarkable range of his knowledge, which demonstrates the advantages of a comparative approach to history. Second, the skill with which he has utilized the methodologies of political sociology and political science to group, compare, interpret and above all test the historical evidence. Third, the rigour with which he presents his arguments, constantly aware of the accusations of unrepresentativeness that can easily be levelled at so broad an interpretation; this has led him to search not only for the most dissimilar cases of successful nationalisms, but for instances of unsuccessful nationalisms, and even for "counter-factual" examples where the conditions for nationalist movements seemed to exist, but nationalism did not develop. This important book will not only teach its readers a great deal, but it will make them reflect on what they know already.

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## Finding a place

Edwin Morgan

GEORGE MACBETH

Poems from Oby  
67pp. Secker and Warburg. £4.  
0 436 27017 X

Oby is a parish near the sea in Norfolk, where George MacBeth has bought the old rectory and two and a half acres of land. The poems are "from" Oby not only in the sense of being mostly written there, but also of reflecting certain values which the poet finds for the first time, or finds emerging into clear focus for the first time, in settling into a country environment. One is horror and parody, science-fiction and sound-effects; there is a new moderation. But much is carried forward from earlier volumes: cats and ovals, children, and the themes of "love and death", which provided the title of his previous book, are still clearly in evidence, the main difference now being, as he says in his foreword, that the treatment is "more consistent, and less diversified by comic and performance and experimental elements". *Poems of Love and Death* ended with "The Flame of Love, by Laura Stargleam: A Mills and Boon Poem"; no such flights into the art of sinking break the tenor of *Poems of Oby*. Consistency is a much admired quality at the moment, and it is diversity which brings pursed lips and

knitted brows. But is this a good thing?

It would be impossible to deny that this is an agreeable, sympathetic, lucid and often moving collection. It has the interest of presenting the reactions of a man moving into a new way of life, making an old country house habitable yet being fascinated by aspects of dilapidation and decay, dealing with bats, moths, frozen cats, dead birds, becoming more directly aware of weather and season, trees and plants, the clear sound of an axe by day and the unexplained terror of a nocturnal cry "like a thin blade sticking in wood". The tone is measured, anecdotal, confidential, rather than lyrical or (in a Tennysonian sense) evocative. The verse wants us to believe it, and succeeds. A recurrent theme, though it is not the whole story, is the contentment and hope that have for the first time, in MacBeth's middle life, in Oby, put paid to years of restless search for loneliness, and unhappy or transitory relationships in various earlier houses which were never homes. As he says in "The Renewal": "The need to find a place always returns."

At Oby, with the Lisa to whom several poems are addressed, he feels the peace of settling down, and gains a new, impersonal, more distant past, a "birthright", a "heritage", a "sense of giant time", an acceptance of the Viking raids as well as of "the pleasant rectors, knocking croquet balls" and that last line really be by the author of.

"The Blood-Woman" and "Report to the Director?" Well, it is true that clumsy words such as "heritage" and "birthright" must be regarded as danger-signals, but before we imagine MacBeth dissolving in sweetness and light or becoming a director of the National Trust we should remember that the winner of rural peace brings his own personal past with him, and some of the best poems are sharp with memories, guilts, losses, pains, wishes and doubts. In "November at the Piano" there is a fine probing of a mother's lost but haunting presence, her piano-playing and her cooking being vividly recalled as the speaker idly and unskillfully presses the keys while he smells a dinner being prepared in his Norfolk kitchen:

Mother, I need to remember, I need to feel.  
I have only these  
three senses to reach and hold  
You with. Let me see your face in the fallen  
leaves. Let me  
taste your blood in the apples down  
from our trees.

In "My Parents' Things, the Yielding", he looks over the old telegrams, wedding-cards, legal papers, re-fills them reverently in his new house, feels the pain of the past, but hopes also that the lines have now come "To garner all a striking fourteen-poem sequence, 'Thoughts on a Box of Razors', he brilliantly allows a subject that have appealed to his earlier self to be developed in a way that is not devoid of the bizarre or the frightening but is

always linked to the realities of his own life in Norfolk, and to specific memories. The blades suggest war, and he thinks of the blitz and of his father's death: they suggest surgical instruments, and he remembers a hospital, and his mother; finally they suggest ordinary cutlery, and he wonders if he should prefer these tamed table razors set in order beside the plates in his quiet house – but with a flick of the old MacBeth decides not:

I like the shocks,  
The tingling brinks, of razors. In this  
house,  
I falter sometimes when I touch your  
breasts.

I have to try again. To keep things whole,

## Southern lights

Chris Wallace-Crabbe

KEVIN HART

The Lines of the Hand:  
Poems 1976-79

59pp. Angus and Robertson.  
0 207 14372 2

GWEN HARWOOD

The Lion's Bride  
76pp. Angus and Robertson.  
0 207 14473 7

Owen Harwood and Kevin Hart have little in common beyond their situation in the alphabet and a tendency to migrate southwards, the former from Brisbane to southern Tasmania, the latter from London to Brisbane to Canberra to Geelong. It could loosely be said that they share an interest in philosophy, but this would not go to the heart of the matter at all. Hart is a professional philosopher, whose unusually translucent poems are at almost every point informed by his Catholic faith; Harwood is continually influenced by Wittgenstein, early and late, but her language games do not press towards a spare, dry self-dramatising. On the contrary, she draws from Wittgenstein marvellous gauds and trinkets, moments of sheer illumination.

Neither Harwood nor Hart has much truck with the two Modernisms – that of the 1920s and that of the latter-day New York prestidigitators. Harwood is both discursively "open", and given to solidly traditional forms, at one point even declaring that "Pentameters flow smoothly from the pen". Hart, three decades younger, commonly writes free verse in regular stanzas. He does, however, also turn to prose poems, to the ghazals which the Ghalib revival has made popular and less successfully, to haiku. To survive into English this tiny form has had of vividly mimetic moments, and Hart is an abstract poet through and through.

Still under thirty, Kevin Hart has been for most of his career to date closely associated with a confederacy known as the Canberra poets, whose tendency is to be clear, unpretentious, low-toned and empirical-discursive. In this book, however, he has won his way through to a loftier though not immodest tone of voice, commensurate with his new religious preoccupations. He has sufficient confidence and sufficient lack of any sense of belatedness, to designate poems "To Christ Our Lord", "To Our Lady" and "Five Prayers".

There is a strategic or dramatic problem in poems which are also prayers. While we have some sense of how these should address themselves to God, it is hard to know how they should "connect" themselves towards their mortal readership, most of whom will not even share the poet's faith. Hart has sought what Donald Davie called "purity of diction" or perhaps more appositely, what James McAuley called "the perennial poetry". He presents his lyrics stripped as far as possible of all the accidents of contemporaneity, all incidental verbal pleasures. In such poems as "My Death" and "My Children" this achieves a fine decorum, but the reader must still accede to the poem as a whole or else to nothing at all.

There are affinities here with French lyric poetry and with the later hermeticists, and it comes as a surprise to find that seven of the poems are adaptations from Spanish French or Italian. These adaptations are completely in keeping with the overall demeanour of the book.

In all we do, it helps to think of  
And live with a Sheffield edge.

If some of the poems, particularly those in direct praise of living in a country, have an unassuming quality, this is no doubt because we lack the conventions and traditions of the house poetry (MacBeth's first stanzas structures notwithstanding). What Jonson or Marvell could do with wit and elegance would be hypocritical today. *Poems from Oby* is an excellent volume, but it is hard to see where it will lead, and one can hope that its author has planted, in addition to carrots and parsley, some seeds of divine discontent.

## SOCIAL SCIENCES

ALFRED SCHUTZ

Life Forms and Meaning Structure

Translated, introduced and  
annotated by Helmut R. Wagner

317pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.  
£11.95  
0 7100 9201 6

BURKE C. THOMASON

Making Sense of Reification: Alfred  
Schutz and Constructionist Theory  
203pp. Macmillan. £15.  
0 353 31497 2

Alan Smith's "invisible hand", Hegel's "cunning of Reason", Marx's "men make history, but not under conditions of their choice", Weber's "sociological fate", Simmel's "tragedy of culture", these are just a small sample of the attempts made in the past to penetrate the greatest mystery of human existence: men think, ponder, choose, pursue aims – but the plight they find themselves in at the end of the day is not of their own making. We know that men and women do whatever they do because they choose to do it this way; we believe that there is nothing more to what we call "society" than a multitude of men and women so making their choices, and yet this mysterious "society" seems to have a will of its own, a "demand" as it were, an aim in its own right, complete with its own logic, reasons, perhaps even motives. Nor has the gap between the essential "subjectivity" of human beings and the stubborn "objectivity" of their social condition been just the philosophers' worry. The farmer hero of John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* found, much to his dismay, that there was no one he could shoot in order to avenge his eviction from the land of his ancestors; in society, unlike in private life, there could apparently be a crime without a criminal and a wrong without a wrong-doer. We all tend to make the same discovery daily, and if we stop to meditate we feel puzzled.

It was in this gap between the subjectivity of human choice and the objectivity of the resulting social world that sociology was born, and there it has resided ever since. Most of its history has been dedicated to incoherent efforts to unearth subterranean passages joining these two distant shores: or failing that, to planning bridges which could, or should be built in order to make up for the regrettable oversight of nature. For at least two hundred years (since the allegedly ordained world turned into a man-made one) the gap has been a challenge to intellectual curiosity. To many, however, it has been more than that: a threat to human dignity, or the last and the most formidable hurdle we have to cross on the way to an anticipated human mastery over the world. The resistance of the global arrangement of human affairs to human purposeful activity seems wrong, or dangerous, or both. Claims to have discovered hidden passages, to have drawn up blueprints for social change, have often been motivated by a curiosity as much as mere scholarly curiosity.

It is an interesting comment on the history of the efforts to so far made to solve the mystery (and so remove the hurdle) have consisted in assigning the philosopher Durkheim to the task of collective consciousness, the relegated all remaining subjectivity to the realm of the pre or anti-social. The local world where the subjectivity of objective social needs. The "unhappy consciousness" of Reason, defined by the alienation of its own self, leading to self-discovery and a new unity. The pragmatic Marx regarded human beings should live, and alienation be ended so that they no longer enslaved by the products they produce. But for reasons of the higher intellect than one

## In the prevailing circumstances

Zygmunt Bauman

better society have faded of late and recipes for re-arranging the state of affairs to make everybody happy have become suspect. With the fluidity of political change now discredited, the gap has become, if anything, still more unsettling than before.

The charm and attraction of Alfred Schutz's solution to the old problem, (discovered long after his death during the "freedom now" episode of the 1960s, and quickly blown up into a "new paradigm for sociology", mostly thanks to the efforts of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann) on the one hand, and Harold Garfinkel (on the other), consisted precisely in the fact that Schutz, like the Heidegger of *Sein und Zeit* and the Sartre of *L'Être et le Néant* before him, proposed a way of attending to one's own "subjectivity" which could in no conceivable way lead on to the duty of doing something about the obstinacy of the world "out there". From a threatening force confounding our efforts, this obstinacy is turned into a necessary ingredient of our "stock of knowledge at hand"; in other words, an important resource which we use in acting and then accounting for our actions. It is, indeed, necessary for any action to be possible, that we should believe in living in a world of more or less well circumscribed objects with more or less definite qualities, objects which resist us and upon which we may act. This knowledge we find ready-made, born as we are into a given society, and particularly into our vernacular, which is "a language of named things and events", "a treasure-house of ready-made pre-constituted types". But it is ultimately you and I who choose between these pre-constituted types and assign to them this or that degree of definiteness. "If I assert with respect to an element of the world as taken for granted: S is p, I do so because under the prevailing circumstances I am interested in the p-being of S, disregarding as not relevant its being also q and r." The "prevailing circumstances" in question are first and foremost biographically determined; and this, in turn, means above all "the already established paramount project" – the only force in our lives to which a causal, "because of" role can be genuinely ascribed.

For anyone versed in existentialist philosophy, there is no great novelty thus far; but Schutz offered his brand of existentialism as a way of doing sociology, a way which would "suspend", or "bracket", as irrelevant to its business, the question whether you and I have been duped, blinded, or otherwise misled into believing in the toughness and permanence of what is perhaps pliable and temporary; whether, in other words, the assumptions which underlie our daily lives are true or false. Such a sociology would not inquire into the truth or falsehood of the beliefs you and I hold, but would concentrate instead on the methods we employ in arriving at and sticking to them. The elegance of Schutz's solution does not come, therefore, without obligations.

Burke C. Thomason argues, with cogency and passion, that the price is well worth paying. Thomason is second to none in assimilating, digesting and making sense of Schutz's legacy. The first three chapters of *Making Sense of Reification* offer arguably the best available *Auslegung* of Schutz's intellectual biography and work; the most lucid and least biased initiation into the Schutzian version of sociology. In the course of presenting Schutz and his readers Thomason explodes a number of persistent myths, which have arisen partly from ignorance, partly from an excess of zeal: for instance, the idea that Schutz was a sociologizing Husserlian (Thomason demonstrates that the backbone of Schutz's sociology was fully formed long before he came across Husserl's work – a fact which Helmut Wagner's edition of Schutz's early notes on Bergson fully corroborates – and that Schutz's selectiveness in his reception of Husserl was dictated by his own, rather than Husserl's, concerns); or the idea that there is an allegedly irreconcilable opposition between Schutz and Talcott Parsons (Thomason

preoccupations were); or the idea that Garfinkel, and the ethnomethodological movement he spawned, can be seen as the one rightful heir to Schutz's legacy.

Thomason's presentation becomes, regrettably (though predictably), less coherent and far less convincing when he moves on to extol the Schutz-inspired "solution" to the antinomy between the subjectivity of human experience and the objectivity of the human world. In Thomason's view, this solution lies in Schutz's version of reification, which is purified of that term's habitual dramatic – often, indeed, demonic – connotations. For Schutz reification (confronting the objects of our actions as *sui generis* autonomous objects) is no longer a mishap or calamity which afflicts human beings, under certain circumstances, but fully contained within the set of pre-conditions of daily life: or at least it is there that it belongs once we accept Schutz's advice to confine our interests to how people go about their daily business and refrain from scrutiny of the auspices under which this business is done. In Thomason's view, such a voluntary self-limitation, which many would consider a liability, is the major advantage of Schutz's "solution".

The point, however, is that, with reification so limited in scope, Schutz does not solve the antinomy at all; he merely sweeps it under the carpet. He does not bridge the gap; he merely projects a multi-dimensional experience on to the flat screen of methodology, where the gap is no longer visible. Thomason makes a lot of the methodological (as distinct from ontological) status of Schutz's description of the *Lebenswelt*. What he means, presumably, is that Schutz's thesis is all about the way in which men and women construct their view of reality, hence the soundness of his

propositions does not depend on what this reality is truly like. Indeed, no judgments as to this is possible within Schutz's system. As long as the system remains so circumscribed, it makes no sense either to ask whether reification is "true" or "false", and whether one can distinguish between "objects" of typifying thought and "things", which manifest their presence by imposing limits on both the *lexis* and *praxis* of human actors (Thomason tries hard, yet unconvincingly, to discount anxiety about distinction as evidenced, for instance, by Berger and Pullman). But this distinction is in the end the product of a methodological decision, and we do not become any wiser about the realities of human life by declaring all questions concerning them as out of order. Thomason is somewhat bewildered by Schutz's sober admission that human beings, as conceived by social scientists, are "puppets" fabricated by these scientists out of the rich stuff of human experience, and that the apparent logic of the puppets' conduct is in this sense also a social-scientific product. But he does not ask how Schutz's own "puppets" had been fabricated. If he had, he would have found that the human agents admitted to Schutz's discourse are shaped in the image of intellectuals, whose entire life rests within the confines of *lexis*; or, rather, who can cling to the counter-factual belief that their *lexis* is fully subject to its own inner rules and immune to the pressures of *praxis*. Schutz is known to have believed that the way in which social scientists go about their theorizing is no different from the way ordinary people behave. What he did was to render such a proposition plausible by first re-moulding ordinary people "after the pattern of social scientists".

Not all people, however, enjoy the luxury of thought freed from the realities "out there". The notorious

equivocation which haunts most "constructionist" theories ("men" who make society and those who are made by society are not necessarily the same men) catches Thomason's attention relatively late in the book, but even then he fails to explore its implications. Resources employed in the "construction" of a meaningful world are not equally available to men and women, to educated and ignorant, adults and children, rich and poor, prison-guards and inmates, doctors and patients – but this fact is conspicuously absent from Schutz's universe, where no one eats his daily bread, still less bakes it or worries about having enough money to buy it. In this universe, equality rules, but it is an equality of the university seminar (or, rather, the seminar's idealized rules). It holds only so long as unpleasant realities like control, asymmetry of power, uneven distribution of freedom are either absent, or – more probably – declared out of court. Gordon Allport once said (of psychologists) that scholars never solve problems, but only get bored with them. Thomason's interpretation of Schutz does not solve the "impasse" between constructionist and realist views of the world, but this is one of those problems which life won't allow scholars to get bored with.

I have already mentioned Helmut Wagner's edition of Schutz's early notes. Written between 1924 and 1928, these contain most of the main insights of *Der sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt*, his later magnum opus, and are notes on his reading of Bergson. For this reason, the translation is a major scholarly event. It amounts to a radical re-writing of the history of "constructionist sociology's" most influential projects to date. What his later interest in the Husserl of *Cartesian Meditations* added to Schutz's ideas, will now be for the historians to work out.

## In the web of pre-judgment

Michael Rosen

HANS-GEORG GADAMER

Reason in the Age of Science  
Translated by Frederick G.  
Lawrence

179pp. MIT Press. £12.95.  
0 262 07085 5

At first sight it is easy to miss the distinctiveness of Hans-Georg Gadamer's philosophy. *Truth and Method*, his major work, strikes one initially less as a piece of philosophical argument than as an exercise – undeniably a rich and erudite one – in conceptual history. The approach is deliberately chosen, of course. It is a direct expression of Gadamer's most deeply held views about the nature of philosophy. For Gadamer, philosophy takes place against – it is, in a sense, generated by – a history of change of meaning in its basic terms. Only in ignoring this could one delude oneself that (in the words of *Truth and Method*) "there are problems as there are stars in the sky". Here rests the philosopher's affinity with the cultural historian, for, ultimately, philosophical theses can have no more convincing proof than that they are seen to draw out the implications of this conceptual history in the most illuminating possible way.

Whether for its originality or the clarity with which it articulated certain contemporary themes (in the end the opposition is a false one for Gadamer) *Truth and Method* was recognized in Germany as a modern classic, and became the focus of an extensive critical debate. The essays now translated as *Reason in the Age of Science* do not fundamentally revise or extend its basic position. Their interest lies more in documenting Gadamer's response to the discussion.

There have been two main strands of criticism. Both are present, for example, in a review of *Truth and Method* by Jürgen Habermas, although

Critical Theory, is from Marx and Hegel. The first criticism recalls Marx's strictures against German Idealism in *The German Ideology*. Marx criticizes there for a science which will "ascend from earth to heaven", starting out from "the real presuppositions... men... in their actual, empirically perceptible process of development". By treating human beings as constrained by such ideal phenomena as history and tradition, Gadamer, it is said, repeats the "abstractness" of German Idealism. In ignoring material conditions he neglects Marx's "first presupposition" of all human existence... that men must be able to live in order to "make history".

The second criticism is that Gadamer, because he denies, against Hegel, that we can apply an underlying standard to history, is set on a path which leads to relativism. There is no guarantee, that is, in a hermeneutic activity by which we revise and criticize our grasp of meanings is a rational one; if, as Gadamer claims, we remain always within a network of presuppositions, who can say that one set is better or truer than another?

As would be expected, Gadamer is not interested in meeting these criticisms polemically. His aims are dialectical rather than eristic; to show how his opponents, too, find a place within his own vision of language and history. Marxism, he argues, is not opposed to the hermeneutic search for presuppositions but is itself an attempt "to get behind the self-interpretations of bourgeois culture". Similarly, he would defend the rationality of Hegel's dialectical argument by showing it to have a validity independent of the Hegelian view of history. He cheerfully describes himself as an advocate of what Hegel calls "bad infinity", for he denies that history can reach a point of completion. Human existence takes place in "a relentless inner tension between illumination and concealment".

In each case, then, Gadamer's reply draws on a picture of human beings

presuppositions and prejudices: a *Vorurteil*, it is, perhaps, his most fundamental doctrine. Yet it seems a limitation in Gadamer's achievement that this notion of *Vorurteil* (literally, pre-judgment) is always left obscure and metaphorical. Ultimately, to describe all types of conditions as *Vorurteile* flattens the very diverse nature of the constraints on human life and meaning. Our need for sustenance, for example – Marx's "first presupposition" – is a material fact about human beings, not in any sense an implicit judgment they make. To extend the notion *Vorurteil* as broadly takes homogenizing heterogeneous phenomena into ideal components of a historical process, all too reminiscent of Hegel's "objective mind".

Although not Gadamer's most substantial work, *Reason in the Age of Science* is to be welcomed for the attention it draws to these important issues. Frederick Lawrence contributes a quite excellent introduction. His translation, however, is not without errors. It seems, at times, only to reach a half-way stage at which the words are "English" but not the sentences: if this were to give the impression that Gadamer is a sloppy or ponderous author it would be most unfortunate. Anyone who has heard one of his scintillating lectures will know, nothing could be further from the truth.

*Modern European Intellectual History: Reappraisals and New Perspectives*, edited by Dominick LaCapra and Steven L. Kaplan, has recently been published (317pp. Cornell University Press, \$29.50, 0 8014 1470 9). Most of the papers which make up the volume were first presented in April 1980 at a conference held at Cornell University, and include contributions from Martin Jay, the Habermas-Gadamer Debate, from Mark Poster on "The Future According to Foucault", from Hans Kellner on The Present State of European Intellectual History, and from Hayden White on Method and Ideology in Intellectual History.

## Winding about and about

Iain Crichton Smith

ALASTAIR FOWLER

From the Domain of Arnholm  
64pp. Secker and Warburg. £4.95.  
0 436 161 80 X

It was inevitable that Alastair Fowler's poetry should have been compared to Empson's: partly because of its agile connections, which make one feel stupid in a way that most modern poetry doesn't. MacDiarmid, Eliot as he profoundly was, also wanted his poetry to be read by the "common man", but it cannot be said that Fowler's ever will be, for the mind behind it is a formidable clever and subtle. It is an idiosyncratic poetry, unfashionable nowadays in its various erudite, esoteric, and obscure. It doesn't come down with the hammer, blow of the image; and yet it is not dry. It has the metaphysical qualities of the sensuous combined with the intellectual, the rigour of the scholar who is also a poet.

Much, but certainly not all, of the poems' subject-matter depends on a knowledge of art or mythology; as in, for example, "The Dutch School" or other poems about the Cretan labyrinth and Theseus. Things wind about and about. Like Theseus one has, in a characterless pun, to "catch the thread". In another pun Ariadne spins a yarn. In "The Great Wall" he wall itself is described in the same winding, snake-like manner. Though the wall has lost its grip on its tail, it nevertheless "has met its end". It is this curious paradoxical turn of Fowler's mind that is interesting. And yet certainly not only that, for Fowler is not merely a Scarlet Pimpernel, now here, now there, flashing witty signals. Thus in "The Dutch School" he writes of children who do not like "still lifes" and who are not interested in the fact "that the fruit has been left by someone living, someone dead."

The connection between children and death is echoed in another poem, "Unholy Dying", which is about a boy called Billy who, practising with a gun, pretends to be hit and fall dead. This poem, like most of Fowler's, is intricately fashioned, and there is a continual flicker of puns. The ending is a bit pat: "When will he hit on some way to find these details out of mind?" but two of the other lines are more resonant: "He's too intent, on practising all / Death's variations to grow up."

It is not necessary to be a confessional poet to have feelings. There will always, as Fowler says, be more to say about roses; the world is both fragrant and horror-stricken, as in a poem called "The Fisherman's Wife" in which the wife sets her husband as bait for crabs. Is there anything more terrifying in Sylvia Plath than that, or more detailed, as in the crabs "frilling his wrists"?

There is no obsession, in Fowler's work, with either the fragrance or the horror. In a poem that has strange ironic echoes of Frost, Fowler says that we like our forests virgin, tenebrous, "holding at length enormous promises". The buried sexuality in his

poetry is a contradiction of the cerebral: for in the end these poems are not cerebral at all. They only appear to be so because they are difficult, and at a time when poems show little of Eliot's "intolerable wrestle" with words and meanings it is good to find a poet who is daring enough to test the reader to his limits. Fowler's audience will, I think, be fit though few; for the pleasures he gives are rare and refined. He is in danger, at times, of falling into a certain glossiness (depending on the manifold labyrinth of language); but behind the play there is a very serious and deeply concerned mind at work. And he often seems to me to achieve what he says poets should – "make what's not yet there to be felt."

## L.A. Suburban

Str, as a guest 'stunned' by our spaces,  
desert silences, endless skies,  
how should we populate vacancy – this  
boredom brooding above the sprinklers,  
these vast horizons at the end of the drive?

You note, in passing, that we build our homes  
'In a plethora of imported styles', Greek,  
Roman, Elizabethan, all at odds  
with our 'lack of roots' – but you smile  
at the burglar alarms' Mickey Mouse chimneys.

And the light, 'it's like a glance  
from god.' That's cute. We love  
your gothic wit. Europe's  
so surreal – damn  
there's another coyote in the pool 'God'.

glance' is everywhere. It haunts us. Even  
our skin's dry cleaned. You conclude  
we're most at home when we stroll  
'through the cool of endless  
slipping walls'; that we live

'In suburbs like giant parking lots  
sprawled on the edge of space.' But  
we're other than exiled moralists  
lounging behind blue shades. (Already  
little, snail, creases)

light up your wintering face. Here  
everyone's rootless. Behind our chatter  
there's always space to squander, distance  
to tease the eye away, a prospect  
of fruitful monotony, not boredom

to be explored as 'freeways throbs  
somewhere far off like ships at sea'

Peter Bland